

PERSONAL

There is no more astonishing feature of the history of ideas than the power of the dichotomy. When a distinction is first introduced it may seem illuminating, even useful.

Coleridge divided the world into natural Platonists and natural Aristotelians (he of course being one of the former). Gilbert Ryle added to the complexity of this dichotomy, as well as to its subtlety as a tool of gossip, by stating that Platonists preferred cats to dogs, and pudding to cheese, Aristotelians being dog and cheese fanciers.

It is well known that conversations beginning "The world is divided into those who x and those who don't x" provide hours of innocent fun for all the family. But in playing such games it is no good trying to be subtle. There is no room for the suggestion that some people may like neither Plato nor Aristotle, nor that liking the one does not rule out liking the other. That would spoil the point.

And so gradually the dichotomy gets its grip. Provided the rhythm is memorable, almost any dichotomy can hold sway: either appearance or reality; either reason or the passions; either freedom or determinism; either

knowing how or knowing that. This last dichotomy, also Rylean in origin, perhaps lies in the background of that fashion for "skills" recently depicted in *The TES*. (Geraint Lloyd-Evans February 17, and Frank Palmer March 7). For to be taught how to do something is to be taught a skill; to be taught that something or other is the case is to be taught a fact. The anti-authoritarian philosophy of education, dominant in the 1960s, held that to teach facts is bad; and therefore, by the dichotomizing law, to be taught skills must be good. If the aim of teaching is not to get the pupil to know that, it must be to get him to know how. That is the inexorable logic of the dichotomy.

In the old days we used to be sceptical about how skills could be taught, though we knew that they were. It was a matter of sitting by Nellie, being given tips, and then being given time to practise. Things like making pastry, getting a sound from your flute, drawing things that looked like things (a much-prized nursery skill) were regarded partly superstitiously, as a matter of inborn genius. But a really good teacher was often thought to be able to do something to help the less well endowed.



Mary Warnock

As for "social skills", now said to be part of the school curriculum, I first heard of them when I was visiting schools for the severely mentally handicapped. The very expression "social skills" suggests that these are difficult things, which people must be taught. And of course for the mentally handicapped, almost anything may be difficult.

For most of us such things as

catching buses, paying for our shopping, making coffee, though we learn them just as we learn to walk and to talk, are not things we generally have to be taught. But for the handicapped, teaching is necessary. They will not pick these things up, though, if taught, they will be able to do them. In this context, the notion of a social skill, something which must be a part of the school curriculum, makes total sense.

What is objectionable, as far as the children are concerned, is the thought that teaching social skills is a matter of teaching certain rules, the following of which will ensure success. If this were so, then obviously the teaching of social skills, and still worse of moral skills, would entail a degree of indoctrination far worse than anything involved in the mere teaching of facts. It would suggest that there are rules which one must learn and obey, and then one can be socially acceptable. I don't think this is actually entailed in the teaching of skills. For a person to be socially skilled seems to me to mean that he is able to manage most ordinary social situations, knows what to do if he is asked to make a speech of thanks, propose a toast, send a registered parcel, spend an evening with his

grandmother, or baby sit for a neighbour; that he knows how to write a proper letter of application, write a letter of condolence, get books out of the library, find his way round the Barbican.

Some of these things he may pick up easily, others with difficulty. All of them are rule-governed; but only to a certain extent, just as "how to play the flute" is only to a certain extent rule-governed. Perhaps the people who object strongly to the theory of social skills forget the essential element of practice that enters into all of skill-teaching.

Moral skills are a different matter. The thought that there are rules here is far more objectionable; and I think it has been perpetuated by the sort of theory current in the sixties and seventies that you could teach morality by teaching people how to reason, not what to reason about, nor how to feel. But that is a different story.

That the teaching of "skills" still dominates school teaching, if it does, seems to me, in any case, to be a testimony to the conservatism of teacher training (philosophy dating back to the 1950s) and to the power, impossible to exaggerate, of the original dichotomy.

DIARY



Regardless of the effect of rate-capping, the under-fives are already getting a raw deal from cuts and newly-imposed taxation.

you can't just feign ephemeral faith when your child is 11, to get a place in a C of E school.

Nursery slope

Whether rate-capping comes in or not, it's clear that the under-fives are already getting a raw deal. Statistics reveal that over a third of local authorities have already made cuts in the voluntary nursery sector - ranging from 10 per cent in Birmingham to 60 per cent in Wandsworth; and to make matters worse the Inland Revenue has just decided that childcare for working, often single parent, women - is a taxable perk, whereas sports facilities - often for men - remain untaxed.

A recent conference at the National Children's Bureau, organized by the National Childcare Campaign, tried to draw attention to the plight of the mother who wants both to make ends meet and to give her child a proper education. I wish that the voluntary organizations would shout these truths louder from the rooftops.

Dr Ronald Davis, the bureau's director, is on record as not wanting to get involved with the shrill voice of the "pressure groups". His predecessor in the job, the formidable Dr Kellner Pringle, would, I suspect, have been more concerned with the shrill voices of the children who were being deprived of essential early help.

However much she felt women should stay at home to look after their children, she would have been a forerunner of under-five cuts, and ministers hard truths. I hope it is not the Charity Commissioners who are warning off these voluntary organizations from explaining just how much worse they could be hit under rate-capping. If it is, my advice is to ignore them. All organizations, like animals, have the right to defend themselves when attacked.

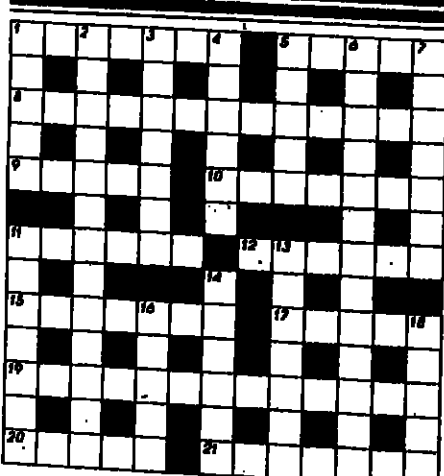
The gentle touch

To the Waldorf in the Aldwych, to hear Dr Ashworth, the vice-chancellor of Salford, discourse on the future of biotechnology. It needed a kind of engineer, we were told, quite different from the nineteenth-century heroic, "masculine" stereotype - Brunel,

standing there, arms akimbo, next to one of his massive cast-iron creations, which had sliced a tunnel or a viaduct through nature. The new biotechnologists we needed were gentler "feminine" types, manipulating the bugs and getting them on their side. A less machine model could attract the most unlikely boys and girls to the dream of scaling new heights in engineering.

Christopher Price

No 147 CROSSWORD by Rufus



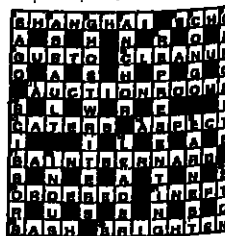
Down

- 1 Dad set out with stick (5)
- 2 Starts earnings out with wrong result (13)
- 3 The rain disturbed the lock-keeper (4-3)
- 4 One's occupation may require this regular pattern (6)
- 5 Be of service when a few grow sick (5)
- 6 Demanded more of the consumer? (3,2,3,5)
- 7 Disorderly crooner in court (7)
- 11 One who cries in an exam upsets a teacher (7)
- 13 Alfredo love song about a writer (4-3)
- 14 Foreign affairs? (6)
- 15 Feeling the lumps (5)
- 16 Sunderland docks (5)

Across

- 1 He casts an item of pottery (7)
- 5 It may be set for lunch (5)
- 8 Changing to steam trains? He should know (7-6)
- 9 It makes sense in the Ruhr (5)
- 10 Explain new turning point in a revolution (4-3)
- 11 A twice arranged be-
- 12 Such food is purely prepared for Jews (6)
- 15 A Thames resort in London (4,3)
- 17 One way to apply a financial to education (5)
- 19 A way to survey the eternal romantic situation (13)
- 20 The U.S. stock market depends on its products (5)
- 21 Conceals, or publicly exhibits (7)

Solution to puzzle No 146



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Aftermoth: chocolate Easter eggs this weekend may mean even more fluoride mouth rinses for these pupils at Prestonpans infants school, East Lothian. The two-weekly ritual is familiar to Lothian primary pupils but not to those in other Scottish regions. A recent survey of 12-year-olds showed that those with a history of regular fluoride rinses had 50 per cent less tooth decay than those who did not. Pictures: Andrea Cringoe

Growing anger among authorities over pay claim deadlock as further education lecturers win 4.5% package settlement

Labour l.e.a.s aim to forestall strike

by David Lister and Richard Garner

Labour local authorities are set to requisition a meeting of the Burnham Committee on teachers' pay to avoid industrial action by teachers.

Labour leaders are desperately worried that strike action after the Easter conferences will affect them adversely in the May 3 local elections. And they are furious about the way the Conservative majority on the Burnham committee has handled the pay negotiations.

The employers' side is now split, and representatives of Labour authorities on the committee have collected sufficient signatures to requisition a meeting after Easter.

Anger over the way negotiations have been handled mounted this week after FE lecturers successfully reached a provisional settlement of a 4 per cent increase on all salaries with an additional £330 for lecturers stuck at the top of £11. This would bring their salary up to £10,454, an overall increase of 7.4 per cent. (The total addition to the salary bill is about 4.5 per cent.)

These negotiations were led by Mr John Peerman, the Labour chairman of Burnham FE, who also committed the employers to a fundamental review of the FE structure, which he said was "becoming more and more outdated". Mr Peerman said the deal came about because of a genuine desire in hearts and minds to negotiate - a desire which was woefully absent in the primary and secondary committee, where the management side is sticking to its 3 per cent offer.

The breakdown in pay talks and subsequent threats of industrial action have led to Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, giving the first hint that prolonged strife in the classroom might jeopardise

the Cabinet approval for the extra cash needed to finance any restructuring of teachers' pay next year.

Following the breakdown in talks, Mr Doug McAvoy, acting general secretary of the National Union of Teachers and leader of the teachers' side during pay negotiations this year, said his union had received many calls for action "above and beyond what the executive is proposing".

"There is every prospect of extended strike action after the one-day strike the union is planning early in May", he said. "We would pick one area geographically and then move on and increase the intensity of action after a time." The NAS/UNW is also exploring the possibilities of selective strike action.

Mr McAvoy was speaking after a peace initiative by Sir John Wordie, the independent chairman of the Burnham committee, had collapsed.

In private talks three ideas had been floated: ● That employers indicate in private they would be in favour of either a 4.5 per cent offer or arbitration between 3 per cent and 7.5 per cent if the teachers were sticking at 12.5 per cent. ● That 4.5 per cent be informally tabled. ● That arbitration be offered, putting figures of 3 and 7.5 per cent to the arbitration panel.

Representatives of the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities would have been prepared to consider the option of increasing the pay offer to 4.5 per cent at last week's management.

Meanwhile, talks on the restructuring of teachers' pay resumed last Friday, "as if nothing else had happened", according to the management.

The two sides agreed to set up special sub-groups to consider particular aspects of the restructuring package, including one on the controversial topic of teachers' duties and responsibilities. They plan to meet again on May 15.

However, Sir Keith this week gave a broad hint that prolonged industrial action might jeopardise Cabinet approval for the extra cash needed to finance any such package.

Questioned after addressing the Assistant Masters' and Mistresses' Association annual conference in Bournemouth as to whether strikes might affect support, he said: "You can't treat these things as isolated - to some extent - from each other."

Teachers greeted Sir Keith with cries of "shame" when he told the conference that if spending on books, equipment and maintenance were cut, it was because "some other head of expenditure has had more than was provided, and it's usually pay".

One questioner told him that the starting salary of a police cadet was higher than a "significant number of teachers", to which he replied: "I don't think you calculate the moral case in the payment of the workers involved."

"You pay if you get value for money - if you go to a concert you don't question the amount the singer is paid", he added, to more cries of "shame" and "we can't afford to go to concerts".

He said police pay had been improved because "experienced police were leaving in droves".

On the pay dispute, the conference voted to endorse advising its members to ban lunchtime supervision and withdraw goodwill in maintained schools next term.

Taking the kicks out of parties

by Jane Pickard

A school psychologist has used "reversal therapy" to understand the motives behind a bizarre and dangerous teenage craze and nip it in the bud.

The craze, "kicking parties" - where adolescent boys and girls take their clothes off and kick each other, could have developed into a nationwide problem like glue sniffing, according to some experts.

But they now hope that by tackling the problem in the right way, the youngsters have been persuaded to kick the habit.

Kicking parties came to light after teenagers started to turn up at a Cardiff hospital with broken arms and legs. They confessed that the injuries had been caused by parties held by a small group of friends. Another group was discovered in Swindon.

School councillors could not find any logical reason for the parties.

The teenagers said they just "did it for kicks". So the case was referred to Mr Steve Murgatroyd, a psychologist from the Open University.

He is an exponent of "reversal therapy" - an approach to human behaviour which breaks new ground by suggesting that most people are motivated only part of the time by reasonable goals. The rest of the time they are "in it for kicks".

So Mr Murgatroyd accepted that the teenagers simply wanted thrills and diverted them into other games such as British bulldog which would give them excitement without much harm.

He also showed them pictures of injured people as a warning about what might happen at kicking parties. This made them more realistic about the thrills.

No let-up in HE demand

by Ngalo Crequer

Demand for higher education is likely to increase throughout the rest of this century, according to a report of the Royal Statistical Society.

The society has been trying to reconcile conflicting claims about projected student numbers, and examine underlying assumptions.

The report will be a serious blow for the Government's contraction strategy and may cause it to re-think some of its policies.

The society's main conclusion is "taking into account the likely effects of both the major factors and the secondary factors the working party are of the opinion that relative to 1980/81 far from being a decline there is likely to be an increase in the demand for higher education throughout the remainder of this century."

The report, not yet considered by the Society's Council, is strongly critical of the DES projections in *Report on Education*, 99.

The report says the DES provides

neither a methodology nor source of data for any of their claims, making it "impossible to pass any sensible judgement on the DES projections." They recommend the DES provides full details of how they arrived at their figures.

They also suggest the DES collect data on the age, sex and social class of entrants to the public sector and produce separate demand figures for each sector.

The working party proposes that 1980/81, or an earlier year should be the base year from which projections are calculated. This was a year before the recent university cuts when it could be argued, they say, that demand was satisfied from adequately qualified students. And in the public sector supply of places then seemed sufficient.

"Choosing a base year will implicitly set the standards in 'A' level or equivalent terms for the projection of future entrants."

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Outing for the forgotten player

Robert Dunn nearly never made his interesting speech in last week's education debate. Mr Dunn, for those who may have forgotten, is the well-known Sainsbury's buyer and now the junior minister in charge of all our schools. Like any good football manager, Sir Keith has to be careful about exposing his less experienced players to too much flak. Wary initial plans were for Dunn to be kept on the touchline, while his more experienced manager, both opened the debate and also wound it up. I'm glad Sir Keith finally



relented and allowed the world seven minutes of pure Dunn wit and wisdom. Robert began by congratulating himself. "We in the Conservative party" (that's him) "have succeeded in wresting from the left-wing educational establishment" (I fear that may be the TES) "the forward thrust of educational ideas and concepts". He then fell to criticising Gyles Radice, the Labour spokesman, and gave us all a fascinating insight into ministerial mental processes: "The Hon. Gentleman has come to the Chamber naked, and is effectively innocent in his lack of educational probing . . ." (sic).

All Greek to me . . .

The Jewel in the Crown is finally over. Magnificent, except for one tiny grain of Philoctetes. Philoctetes grates beyond words. Was I wrong?



It all seems terribly complicated, but it's done to spread the criteria, so that



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Now is the time for all good men . . .

"This, Fortescue, is serious . . ."

"Yes, Secretary of State. And there are various other odds and ends before we break up . . ."

"I suppose I could issue a categorical denial . . ."

"There's a minute here on London elections and criterion-referenced testing . . ."

"But, The Economist is very widely read . . ."

"And another one here on the miners' strike and criterion-referenced testing . . ."

"It's bound to be noticed in Downing Street . . ."

"And a third on the Olympic Games and criterion-referenced testing. There was also one on the Polish Question and criterion-referenced testing, but this was re-routed to the Foreign Office."

"When The Economist says: 'Sir Keith Joseph is turning into the best secretary of education since the war', I am gravely compromised."

"It is difficult, sir. The permanent secretary says just ignore it. He has taken steps to let Downing Street know it wasn't he who leaked."

"I bet he has. You obviously can't have more than one 'best minister of education' at a time, and the view of the present government, expressed forcefully by the Prime Minister, is that the recipient of that accolade now resides at Number

Ten."

"Perhaps a few flowers, sir? Or a first edition set of Halsbury's Laws of England, nicely gift-wrapped? Or even some suitably monumental gaffe on your part to put The Economist off the scent?"

"No, no, Fortescue. I shall just have to learn to live with this discovery. What's that about the London elections?"

"Well sir, this is a difficult one. If we allow the elections to be norm-referenced, there is a strong likelihood that the wrong people will win."

"There is always such a chance, Fortescue, in free elections. This is the price we pay for . . ."

"Of course, sir. Nobody would dream of anything which smacks of gerrymandering, but, the fact remains that something has to be done to make sure the right people come out on top."

"That's true, Fortescue. Like what?"

"Like getting Sir Wilfred Cockcroft to devise nice new criteria which all candidates for the ILEA would have to satisfy."

"What had you in mind, Fortescue. Something like a 'forty-shilling frechold' to make sure all electors have a strong sense of financial responsibility? The House of Lords would never wear it."

"How about excluding all members of the Labour

Party and the Alliance on the grounds that they were politically biased? (Did you notice, The Economist also said you were 'apolitical'?)"

"No, certainly not, Fortescue, that would never do. (How unfair) Something more sophisticated is needed. Get Sir Wilfred to wrap it up. Set a list of questions for candidates which make no mention of party politics, but then standardize the marking to ensure success correlates with responsible attitudes."

"Not too sophisticated, sir . . ."

"No or you won't get any one through. Mr Dunn is an old Southwark councillor. Try it on him."

"Very good, sir."

"Now, finally, the Olympics. I think this is well worth pushing . . ."

"Yes, sir. But we have a problem . . ."

"Of course, we have a problem, Fortescue. The International Olympics Committee has been allowed to sink deeper and deeper into complacency."

"Yes sir. And there is no doubt they have become committed, over the years, to norm-referenced testing in a particularly extreme form."

"True, Fortescue. And we know it leads to an appalling amount of coaching and special training and quite distorts every other aspect of the

competitors' existence."

"Yes, sir."

"What does Sir Wilfred think?"

"He says they seem obsessed with the idea of the highest standards are produced by an athlete trying to do better than all the rest . . ."

"Just what I used to think, Fortescue, but then an outmoded concept which condemns half the world to below average performance."

"Of course, Secretary of State."

"What we need are new criteria which can be achieved by 80 or 90 per cent . . ."

"But, Secretary of State, wouldn't this make an over-crowded field at Los Angeles?"

"Don't misunderstand me, Fortescue. We can only go a step at a time. I look forward to the day when all who can achieve a pre-stated set of grade-related qualifying standards get their gold silver and bronze medals."

"H'm."

"Really, Fortescue, you don't think I am opposed to individual enterprise. Competition is a engine of excellence . . ."

"I have to confess, Secretary of State, I am confused."

"Never mind Fortescue, you're not the only one. Look at The Economist."

COMMENT

CATE must have a mind of its own

Just 13 months after the White Paper on Teaching Quality comes the Council for the Accreditation of Teachers Education - CATE for short.

In Professor William Taylor, the former director of the London Institute of Education, now principal of London University, Sir Keith Joseph has found the ideal chairman - thoroughly experienced, highly respected, a robust administrator of sound judgment - to provide the right sort of leadership for the important first few years. The first task is to review all the present courses and their modification in the light of the published criteria laid down in the annex to this week's circular. This is expected to take from two to four years. When this task has been completed CATE's own future will be reconsidered and, depending on the volume of continuing care and maintenance work, a decision will be made on whether or not it should become a permanent feature of the educational landscape.

Circular 384 makes it clear that the Council will be expected to listen attentively to the HMI's, whose activity on the teacher education front has greatly increased and who will now become even more influential. There are obvious pitfalls here, especially in respect of the university departments of education which the Circular is careful to stress HMI's can only enter "by invitation". Steps have been taken to strengthen the Inspectorate's stock of expertise in this area, but even so they will need all the delicacy of Agassiz as they tread this particular minefield.

But HMI is not to be the only source of wisdom for CATE. It will also have to take account of the views of the local teacher education committees and its members will make their own visits and investigations. Sir Keith Joseph wants the formal protection of an independent Council, under an independent chairman, with members appointed as independent individuals; but he also clearly wants

the Council to act as an extension of the DES. It is extremely important that the members of CATE, knowing this, should insist on acting as if their independence were real. It is not their job to set about frustrating the Secretary of State, but it is their duty to the education service as a whole to exercise their own mature judgment.

They may well outline the present administration at Elizabeth House, and they must be concerned about teacher education in the long-term, not just the immediate aims of the present Secretary of State.

What is taking place in teacher education, as in other aspects of English education such as the school curriculum, is a tightening up process - unwritten assumptions are being replaced by written criteria, and informal professional intuitions are being replaced by rules and regulations. This may well stem from causes which lie right outside the education system in the mounting distrust of professions generally, and the parallel moves to curb other areas of professional discretion or privilege. It may all be necessary. Whether it will lead to better teacher education is another matter.

It may do so, but only if the men and women who work in teacher education - motivated by professional enthusiasm (if they are any good) not by rules and regulations, are moved to do better things. Till now it has been thought that freedom, not constraint, produces better scholarship and better teaching. It is important not to lose sight of this old fashioned truth amid the flurry of new-found managerial zeal.

Dusty answers

When Sir Keith says teachers should accept larger class sizes as the price to be paid for more in-service training, (page 5) he gets a dusty answer. Teachers tell him that because of falling rolls they need more teachers per 1,000 pupils to protect the curriculum.

The government's projections have not allowed for an improvement in



Sir Keith at the AMMA conference in Bournemouth

staffing ratios sufficient to cover the needs of curriculum-led staffing policies. Some local authorities have, nevertheless, committed themselves to this admirable aim, and they are among those who have had difficulty in living within the means which the Department of the Environment allows them. As the penalties on overspending are stepped up, more and more authorities are having to budget for deteriorating staffing standards.

Sir Keith's argument could theoretically still stand. It might, in theory at least, be better to put up with even more difficulty in day to day staffing for the deferred benefits promised by more in-service training. But this is not based on any serious assessment of the pros and cons on the ground. And as Sir Keith was quickly told, there is always the risk that if schools can be shown to be capable of managing with fewer teachers in order to release some for in-service training, hard pressed with fewer teachers just to save money. Having failed to persuade the Treasury to pay for a curriculum-led staffing policy, he cannot reasonably expect the teachers to compound their own difficulties by endorsing his claims for in-service training.

FE - who does what?

Seeing that the dust has been gathering on the review of the legal basis of further education published nearly three years ago, who could be surprised that the Government has now decided to do nothing about it, after all (page 3)? Or that the decision was slipped out at prime time for such announcements, in a parliamentary answer, just as Members were breaking up for the hols?

The tidying up of the legal basis for FE has never been high on the political agenda, but it did seem to exercise the DES almost as much as local authority associations for quite some time. Of particular concern was whether full-time education for the 16-19 group could, under the law, be offered in either school or FE, or had to be in school. Neither interpretation had been tested in court.

This mattered most to young people with handicaps and, indeed, it was the Warnock Report's emphasis on their rights to further education which largely prompted the wider review - which in its turn preempted any reference to FE in the 1984 Special Education Act.

The fact that none of the threatened court cases actually materialized while legislation was hanging fire is undoubtedly helped to convince the DES that there was no compelling case for doing anything. The Secretary of State himself has made clear that he is in no doubt of the special needs entitlement to FE, and is perfectly prepared to enforce it under what he takes to be the present law.

Leaving aside the matter of law compelling this precedent will prove once Sir Keith himself has moved on there is, in fact, some measure of relief in the special education lobby that the law is not to be clarified by this Government. They fear it might be changed in a way which might actually weaken rights.

This relief is not shared in the local authorities, who are also concerned about fees and recruitment, as well as Section 42 on the approval of schemes, which leaves most FE arrangements technically defective in law.

The authorities have been trying to get the legal basis of FE (FE(L)) on the "partnership" agenda for State, and was the first item on the plans for an alternative review of NAFE discussed by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities education committee last week. They were not reassured when DES officials, in their playful wry rechristened it ROLFE (Review of Law of Further Education). What concerns the l.e.a.s most deeply is the lack of legal definition of what constitutes a full service. At a time when off to the Manpower Services Commission, a parliamentary answer which talks mischievously of "other measures now in hand to promote efficiency and effectiveness in further education" is bound to make them nervous about what else is to follow.

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Ministers admit no FE reforms

by Biddy Passmore

Ministers have finally admitted they have no plans to reform the legal basis of further education, nearly three years after a working group of central and local government officials found serious gaps and anomalies in the law.

The news has come as a blow to local authorities, who were hoping for a clarification of the extent of their duty to provide further education under the 1944 Act.

At present, they have to provide for all those under 19 who want to continue in full-time education, but whether they must do so in both

schools and colleges is not clear. And their powers to provide for those over 19 are ill-defined.

"The lack of definition of what constitutes the full service is what concerns us most", Mr Bob Morris, education officer of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said this week.

In questions answered simultaneously in the Commons and the Lords, the Government said: "After careful consideration of the recommendations in the review *The Legal Basis of Further Education*, and taking account of other measures now in hand

to promote efficiency and effectiveness in further education, the Government has decided not to introduce new legislation on further education at present."

The "other measures" are thought to include the forthcoming switch of funding and control of one quarter of all non-advanced, work-related courses to the Manpower Services Commission.

Local authorities were also hoping that the requirement in the 1944 Act to provide further education only in accordance with schemes approved by

the Education Secretary would be lifted, as the review had recommended. Only a very few authorities have up-to-date, approved schemes, which suggests that most further education provision is *ultra vires*.

But Sir Keith Joseph said last week: "It remains open to any local education authority which considers that its scheme of further education made under section 42 of the Education Act 1944 is unsatisfactory to propose modifications for approval by the holder of my office."

Parents buy 'peace of mind' at independents

by Lucy Hodges, education correspondent of The Times

Children who go to independent schools do not necessarily achieve better exam results or find better jobs than they would had they gone to a state school, say two academics in a book to be published this summer.

The evidence is that the kind of school a child attends has little effect on examination performance, according to Dr Ted Tapper, newly appointed reader in politics at Sussex University, and Dr Brian Salter, senior research fellow at Surrey University.

The two academics suggest that parents who pay high fees to send their children to public schools may have more money than sense. "What parents value differs. So what appears to be an irrational decision to some may be perfectly reasonable to them," they say in a chapter contributed to *British Public Schools: Policy and Practice* to be published by Falmer Press in August.

"It must also be remembered that they are making decisions about the schooling of their own children (their italics), and as most parents want to do the best by them they may well be inclined to ignore the general picture in the belief that their circumstances

are special. All they may gain is peace of mind, but this alone may be worth the expense."

Their work is critical of both Conservative and Labour Parties for perpetuating myths about independent and comprehensive schools. The two academics argue that neither party has a clear understanding of educational realities, and that their views are woefully inadequate.

The public school question touches on the ideological soul of both the main political parties, they say. Labour is preoccupied with the class intake of independent schools and thinks such schools are imposing a narrowly academic interpretation of schooling on the education system.

But there is no evidence that the private sector is training a future ruling class or that it exercises an independent influence on a person's job chances, the authors suggest.

They call the Conservative policy just as misguided, because it assumes that the academic standards of too many comprehensive schools are abysmally low, whereas most of the evidence indicates that the organization of secondary schooling has little impact on exam performance.

DES to fund pupil records

by Mark Jackson

Pilot schemes for the development of a national system of pupil records of achievement are to begin next spring. They will be funded by the Department of Education and Science with part of the money which is to be deducted from the rate-support grant to finance specific Government schemes.

Between five and ten projects with various approaches to recording achievement will be supported Mr Bob Dunn, education under-secretary, announced this week. Local authorities will be invited to submit bids for projects early in the summer and regulations for the selected schemes will be funded under this year's Education (Grants and Awards) Act will be laid before Parliament soon afterwards. The schemes selected will be announced towards the end of the year.

Mr Dunn told an Industrial Society conference in London on Tuesday that the Government would be issuing a definitive policy statement on achievement records around the same time as it invites local authority bids.

He added: "In the light of experience gained in the pilot schemes, we hope that records of achievement will subsequently be introduced nationwide. It is obviously desirable that they should have common characteristics which would make them acceptable and useful to employers throughout the country. There would however still be scope for local variations within a national framework."

Searches 'wreck' police campaign in schools

by Sarah Bayliss

Attempts by the police to do positive work in schools can be seriously undermined when a high proportion of pupils are being stopped, questioned and searched by police outside school hours.

That is the conclusion of a study published this week by the Hillingdon Legal Resource Centre, in West London titled, *Police in the Classroom*.

Over half the sample of 295 teenagers aged 14 to 16 in a relatively middle-class outer London borough have been stopped and searched or questioned by the police.

The author, Dr Gwyneth Vorhaus, said this week she was surprised by the high number of teenagers (52%) stopped, and was worried by the negative effect. "As a direct result of their experience, we found them to be hostile towards the law, antagonistic towards the police and anti-law and order, pro-police."

The finding was more surprising because Hillingdon was far less deprived than many areas, being largely white with low unemployment. "To begin with these kids tend to be pro-law and order, pro-police."

She called on the Home Office urgently to review its stop and search policy. "For every guilty youngster they catch, the police would seem to be antagonising ten or 12 times as many who are innocent."

The study also recommends a thorough monitoring and national assessment of police education programmes in schools by the Department of Education. In some areas programmes

have been going on for almost ten years. Dr Vorhaus accompanied three officers of the Juvenile Bureau of the Metropolitan Police to seven mixed comprehensives in Hillingdon. A programme had been devised by a police with the local authority covering up to 14 topics from traffic offences to the dangers of hitch-hiking.

She found that the police measurably influenced pupils' opinions on law and order, crime and punishment, but did not measurably increase knowledge. The officers, who were dedicated and popular on a social level, had received less than two weeks training to prepare them for their work in schools.

"This probably explains why pupils are not acquiring much knowledge," said Dr Vorhaus. "Individual enthusiasm is no substitute for teacher training."

She says there are no checks and balances - such as HMI visits on police teaching - and there are no clear objectives. She found a one-sided emphasis on law and order and, while not blaming the police for this, said schools should teach much more practical law to pupils.

In response to her questions, pupils said they very much wanted to know how the law would affect their adult life as employees, consumers, drivers, voters, buyers and sellers.

Copies of *Police in the Classroom* are available from H.L.R.C. 12 Harold Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex, E3.50, plus £1.50 P.&P.

Job-swaps on agenda

by Bert Lodge

A national job-swapping scheme for teachers is called for in a resolution down for debate next week at the annual conference in Llandudno of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers.

The union will also face conflicting resolutions on corporal punishment, a subject on which it recently had a reputation for single-mindedness. Other resolutions called for urgent negotiations with the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education with a view to merging, and a motion from Nottingham school to be given an automatic week off on full pay.

The voluntary national exchange scheme for teachers, called for by the Sandwell association, attempts to solve the problem of lack of opportunity for teachers to widen and freshen their experience, as mobility slows down in a contracting work force.

A motion from Sheffield calls on the union to "cease making declarations in favour of corporal punishment", and another from Merton would turn the union's stance of a few years ago right round by calling for the abolition of the cane.

Both are down for debate in private session, but a priority motion down for debate on the first day, comes from Ashington, Enfield, Colchester and Mid-Sussex associations, and condemns the Secretary of State for dithering over the possibility of allowing parents to dictate whether their child shall be subject to corporal punishment.

SEC acts on criteria

by Hilary Wilce

Working parties to develop grade-related criteria in eight subjects are to be set up this autumn by the Secondary Examinations Council.

In a letter to the Education Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph, this week, Sir Wilfred Cockcroft, chairman of the council, announces a decision to set up a rolling programme of research, beginning with English, mathematics, French, Welsh, history, geography, craft, design and technology (CDT), and physics. The first draft criteria should be produced by the summer of 1985, the letter says.

The council is proposing working parties of up to 10, drawn from the local authorities, the Joint Council for National Criteria subject working party, subject associations, further and higher education, and industry.

Their terms of reference are to identify up to six areas of the subject that may be assessed; to look at how scores in these areas could be aggregated; to specify the skills and competencies related to CSE grade 4 and O level grades C and A; and to ensure that the proposals will have a beneficial effect on the curriculum.

The council says it can meet the proposed costs - which include paid secondment to the working parties - in this financial year but will need an increased grant from the Department of Education and Science to meet the £360,000 which it estimates the programme will cost in a full year.

Mr Peter Dines, deputy chief executive, said that Sir Keith's reaction to the proposed rolling programme would be a test of how serious he was about grade-related criteria. "He may think we're being extravagant with public money; if so we'll get a very clear message to this effect."

"But no one yet knows how grade-related criteria can work, no one really understands them. This will be genuine research, and if the idea really is fruitful, then it is something we would have to do in every part of the curriculum."

Dinner ladies must take cut

School dinner ladies in Hertfordshire and East Sussex have been told by the High Court that they must accept pay cuts of about 20 per cent imposed by the local authorities.

In a test case, Mr Justice Mann ruled that new contracts drawn up by the l.e.a.s were reasonable in the light of the competing interests of ratepayers and employees. He told the authorities, "recognized and regretted" the loss of pay.

NUPPE general secretary Mr Rodney Dickerstrale later described the outcome as "tantamount to legal theft" in which the councils were "stealing wages" from women serving their communities.

In a separate case, the judge ruled that Birmingham's chief education officer had been wrong to dismiss 5,000 dinner ladies because the city council had acted beyond its powers. But the council is free to reintroduce the scheme by following a different legal path.

Training watchdog gets under way

The organisation which will monitor teacher training courses in England and Wales formally came into being last week.

The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education will be chaired by Dr William Taylor, Principal of London University, as forecast in the TES (January 6).

On the same day as the new body was announced, Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, also published a circular setting out criteria which the council will use in judging courses. The criteria are broadly similar to those enunciated in the White Paper, *Teaching Quality*, published last year (TES, March 25, 1983).

no comment

"Chess is described as 'an unusual curricular component' in a School Inspectors' report on Kirby's Redwood Comprehensive . . . All 360 first-year pupils play chess, and in the second year it becomes an alternative to needlework, making it popular with the boys."

From The Observer, April 15

The wounded carthorse

Christopher Price looks at the adverse factors that have eroded the power base of the National Union of Teachers

Until recently, the National Union of Elementary School Teachers, founded by George Collins in 1872, and its successor, the National Union of Teachers, have been a power in the land of education. Time was when no government or local authority could move in direct defiance of them, and, even if they opposed them indirectly, they would always listen and consult first. They don't any more. Somehow, that pervasive influence of England's largest teachers' union is no more.

The slow disintegration of this influence has been partly of their own making and partly shaped by the new political realities of recent years. However brilliant their leadership, strategy and tactics had been, the late 1970s and early 80s would have presented quite new and formidable problems.

Teacher unemployment has lost them at least 20,000 members over the past decade, and probably more; incomes policy, overt under Labour, veiled but even more stringent and arbitrary under the Conservatives, has hobbled their ability to raise the standard of living of their members; the threat to the dwindling sixth form and the slide towards a universal system of tertiary education foreshadows a further substantial membership loss to NATFHE over the years to come; and the general attack on local government, coupled with the threat of rate-capping, makes the future even more daunting.

Nor is it just that they have suffered from the generalized attack on the public services and public education. They have lost their former indispensability to central government. The principle of English education established in 1870 and finally consolidated in 1944 was that of a national service locally administered. For so long as that local educational autonomy survived, the national system was sustained by its twin pillars - the Association of Education Committees led by Sir William Alexander, the archetypal British administrator, and the National



Union of Teachers, led by Sir Ronald Gould, the archetypal English headmaster. Ministers came and went, loyal to the consensus negotiated for them from below by its twin high-priestly knights, English education thrived on a rising birthrate - a somewhat fat cuckoo in the local government nest, but a remarkably successful one.

It was at this point that the rot set in. Local government reorganization under Heath; Baines corporate merger which accompanied it at the behest of the bureaucratic Establishment; the ousting by local political leaders of the power of the education

empire; collision between the two political parties at national level to speed the whole process; and a squabbling NUT - all allowed the Association of Education Committees to be undermined and finally exterminated; with one pillar of the national system gone, the other one, the NUT itself, could never be quite the same again. But it was not just under external forces that the union's national influence began to collapse. There were internal aims of both omission and commission. The first must be their failure over the past 20 years to negotiate a settlement in their internecine warfare with the National Association of Schoolmasters.

The battle has been an arid one. Neither union has gained and education has lost a great deal as a result of it. They get on a little better now they are both in the TUC, but the split has wasted millions of man hours, distorted the NUT's educational policies and dissipated energy at both local and national level. There have been opportunities for unity in the past, and all have been passed up. Of course the NAS/UNT is just as guilty. But the political responsibility for healing the split lay with the NUT. Unity still remains as far off as ever.

A side-effect of this civil war has been a defensive obsession with maintaining their numerical holding in the system at every possible opportunity. Both Burnham and the Schools Council have been rent over the years with arid disputes about numbers when both should have been talking about education. One reason why a Teachers' Council never materialized - though Ted Short was keen on the idea - was fear of another numbers row.

One result has been to surround the NUT with an aura of political pettiness and educational philistinism - a reputation quite unfair to the majority of its officers, executive members and local officials. The other has been to kill the Schools Council and to deprive the profession of their substantial holding in the curriculum. Of course there have been other ministerial villains of this particular piece - but any majority teachers' union worth its salt should have been able to outmanoeuvre a

holding operation. It is not just the war with the NAS/UNT that has projected the union's political image above its educational one. The union has also allowed itself to become a nursery for political schemers of the Left. It's not just the Far Left, the Alliance/Labour Party split has reverberated through Hamilton House. Enormous amounts of energy have been spent on preventing the young, radical elements in the union from taking it over; and some of those, like Max Morris, who positively encouraged these elements in the past, have spent later years deploring the

The dilemma for the NUT lies in fulfilling simultaneously its trade union and its educational role. The new TUC connexion has made the historic educational role more difficult.

growth of the schismatic monster they themselves had a hand in creating. There is a problem here; there is no doubt that the NUT Executive, though now somewhat less than the grey mountain range of exploded headmaster volenscences it used to be, is still far too male, elderly, Establishment and boring. It would be even worse without some radical element constantly to chivy it up. But the manner of that chivying, particularly in London, has often bestowed upon the NUT the image of a wounded carthorse unable to control its rebels, and upon the rebels a progressive and even romantic air. Neither reputation is properly justified.

So the dilemma for the NUT, not yet fully solved, lies in fulfilling simultaneously its trade union and its educational role. It had to join the TUC - for one thing the NAS had done so already - and the logic of the Wilson/Heath corporate state demanded that the

union should be in there, arguing for teachers. But there is little doubt that the new TUC connexion has made the historic educational role more difficult. It has been the more so because, in 1972, the NUT chose a general secretary, in Fred Jarvis, who had never been a teacher and was more politician than educationist.

Just as one imagines that, if called upon to do so, Ray Buckton could actually drive a railway engine, so it was crystal clear that Sir Ronald Gould could keep order in a classroom. Fred has always suffered from the disability that people think he couldn't, and that image has rubbed off on the union as a whole.

Under his general secretaryship the politicians of the English Right have taken control of the school curriculum. The Black Papers, Callaghan's Ruskin speech, the death of the Schools Council and the growth of the MSC outside the education service all stand in linear progression. They would not have happened so easily if the country's largest teachers' union had been perceived as able to address itself to the burgeoning educational difficulties of the early 1970s. All too often, it seemed preoccupied with teachers rather than children.

It would be quite wrong, however, to give the impression of a rank-shackle union. While at national level it has suffered a series of reverses and failed to take opportunities, the NUT at local level is as strong, well-organized and concerned with education as ever. Its links with both the political machine and the educational administrators in both the Labour cities and in the Conservative counties remain influential. It takes the lead in local negotiations, without any of the inter-union backbiting observable on high.

If local education committees were the powerful machines they used to be there would be nothing to worry about. The reality of the NUT's political influence would remain intact. But as we have noted, education committees are now circumscribed by leaders of councils and chief executives and county treasurers and rate-capping and the MSC and even direct interference in the curriculum from the Secretary of State. Their champions, the chief education officers, are no longer of the calibre that they used to be.

A nationally influential NUT is now essential for the public education service, as created by the 1944 Education Act, to survive. So what to do? How should the delegates at Blackpool next week set about re-establishing their union's power and influence? First they should overhaul their public relations. (They're currently seeking a new press officer.) Time after time, they get a worse press than they deserve, simply because they don't explain themselves. Second, they should strengthen their specialist educational work. They could have had a far greater influence that they did on the Select Committee's report on the secondary school curriculum two years ago, if they had prepared a more cogent case on some of the crucial issues. Third, there is a case for re-establishing their public dialogue with ministers again.

The Secretary of State's speech at the NUT conference used, at one time, to be the prime point in his educational calendar - the only annual occasion on which he was forced to try to sell his ideas to real teachers. Three years ago the NUT conference quite justifiably felt it had to express its disapproval in the only dramatic way possible - by excluding him. But it was a more important step than was made clear at the time. Education is meant to be a partnership - and all the elements in the partnership have a responsibility for it.

If the NUT take themselves seriously, one day they will have to reassert diplomatic relations - if only as a tactical move. However irresponsible the present Government has treated ordinary children within ordinary schools, the NUT have a historic responsibility to defend those children's chances through every available public channel open to them.

Richard Garner reports on the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association conference in Bournemouth

Smaller classes not always best, Says Sir Keith

Larger teaching groups could produce an educational advantage, Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, told the conference. They might be needed to free teachers for remedial groups or for in-service training.

He disagreed with those who said that problems in schools could be overcome with more teachers. "There is no 'right size' for school classes," he said.

"Where there is educational advantage in marginally larger teaching groups to release teachers for other and competing priorities, we must see to it that the potential educational advantage is realized."

Questioned afterwards about his speech, Sir Keith said that an increase of "two or three" for some classes would involve no educational disadvantage and might release a teacher

for more remedial work which would otherwise be threatened.

He added: "In many schools they prefer to have marginally larger classes, and you must remember there has been a 15 per cent improvement in pupil-teacher ratios over the last 10 years."

Earlier in his speech, Sir Keith had said he would be seeking agreement soon on a statement about the overall nature and structure of the school curriculum.

He added that policy statements on science education and foreign languages would be issued soon - together with a paper on the objectives of English teaching, which would be published for consultation.

He said that the Joint Council of GCE and CSE boards had now largely completed work on the preparation of national criteria for the most popular

subjects in the curriculum, and he hoped that within the next two or three years all syllabuses for the 16-plus examinations would have been brought into line with the national criteria.

He added that the Secondary Examinations Council - at its meeting last Friday - had decided to go ahead and launch pilot studies "in no fewer than eight topics" which would help the move towards grade-related criteria.

Questioned about teachers' pay, he told the conference that "supply and demand" could not be ruled out in discussing pay, and taking the example of a concert singer, said: "You pay if

you think it is value."

Replying and giving the traditional vote of thanks to Sir Keith on behalf of the AMMA, Mr Alan Meredith, executive member from Warwickshire, said: "I can't really thank him for the fact that his very proper concern about education standards should have been presented in such a way that ill-informed public opinion is allowed to come to the conclusion that we're all of us incompetent."

"I can't either thank him for the fact that he has presided over, and does preside over, a department which has allowed the morale of teachers to fall to a level so low that I would never have believed it possible."



Sir Keith Joseph: 'Realize the potential advantage'

Cuts 'cause suffering among companies'

Commercial ratepayers have benefited to the tune of £665m a year from funds spent on education, Miss Doon Jones, AMMA president, told the conference.

Miss Jones, vice-principal of Halsowen Tertiary College in Dudley, West Midlands, said groups such as the CBI, the Institute of Directors and commercial ratepayers had often characterized rates as a "benefitless tax" - a siphoning off from private industry of funds they could need to achieve economic reconstruction.

But the public should question whether money spent on education was money lost to the private sector,

adding: "In the financial year 1983/84, local authorities planned to spend £295m in the private sector on the maintenance of buildings; just over £22m on furniture; and nearly £348m on books, equipment and other materials. So, £665m of the national education budget - nearly £75 for every pupil and student - is re-cycled back into the private sector."

"If education is cut, private industry suffers, a point validly made by the publishers and less vocally and effectively by the construction industry, characterized as it is by many more small contractors."

Miss Jones went on to criticize Sir

Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, for telling the Select Committee on Education that any pay rise for teachers above three per cent would have to be bought at the expense of books and equipment.

She added: "I do not accept the implications of Sir Keith's argument, that teachers should be required to fund schools from their own pockets."

"When the question of MPA salaries was under discussion last year, any suggestion that they should not have a rise commensurate with the erosion of their salaries was firmly rejected, and properly so; but I am unwilling to hear those who applied logic to their own

situation accuse me of hypocrisy for seeking to apply the same rationale to mine."

She said that two-thirds of the teaching force - who are on Scale 1 or 2 without the prospect of promotion - were "unlikely to reach even the average earnings of white-collar workers after a lifetime in the classroom."

"Unless there is a radical restructuring (of teachers' salaries) which provides real rewards to the classroom teacher for doing the professional job of educating the nation's young, then I predict that the next ten years is more likely to see a breakdown in the service."

Dons get together to fight for the arts

by Bert Lodge

More than 100 dons from 30 universities have united against what they see as a threat to arts and social sciences in Britain's universities.

In an 11-point declaration adopted at the end of a special meeting in Leeds on Monday, they rejected the popular idea that arts and social sciences were not vocationally relevant, called for an end to the switching of resources from humanities to science and technology, and rejected government thinking that a drop in the birthrate would mean a corresponding drop in student numbers.

A steering committee was appointed and a further meeting will be held probably in autumn. Delegates agreed, meanwhile, that it was important to get their case across to a wider public.

One working group recommended that the meeting should press for arts degrees to be extended to four years, plus a foundation year if necessary, despite recent government interest in

shortening some degree courses to two years. Courses should be more broadly-based.

"We favour 'transdisciplinarity'. There will be more demand for it as there is more of it in schools," said Dr Jennifer Birkett, dean of arts and social science studies at Dundee University.

Mr Martin Milligan, dean of arts at Leeds University and one of the organizers of the meeting, called it an unprecedented event. It came only two weeks after more than 50 deans of arts in universities or university colleges had sent a letter to the University Grants Committee rejecting all the assumptions on which the Government's policy of restricting funding to universities is based.

These were contained in a circular from Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, the UGC chairman, last November inviting institutions to consider how to achieve more vocational relevance in higher education and how to attract

more good students from arts to sciences. It also reminded them that a drop of 15-20 per cent in student numbers would be inevitable over the next 10 years because of a drop in the birthrate during the 1970s.

"Attracting students into technology and science has been the policy for the last 50 years", Mr Milligan said. "Now we hear it is going to be the policy - pursued with renewed vigour - for the next 10 years."

A paper submitted to the meeting by Dr Ian Diamond, of the department of social statistics, Southampton University, summarized the 10 projections of the demand for university places in the 1990s made this country since 1976.

Dr Diamond concluded: "The results demonstrate convincingly that there is no doubt that the number of university entrants will not drop in the same volume as predicted either by the drop in the birth rate or in the predictions made by the DES."

Union attacks 'privatize' plan

The state schooling system should be sold off to private "firms" and the poor given enough money to pay the resulting school fees, argues Professor Patrick Minford in the latest edition of *Economic Affairs*, the journal of the Institute of Economic Affairs.

He suggests that providing the money for a minimum standard of education through means-tested vouchers, payable on the production of receipts for fees, would stop the poor from spending it on food, opera or bingo instead. In higher education, grants would be replaced by loans.

His plans for education form part of an analysis of public spending which,

he claims, would save £43 billion a year by 1990. The savings in education alone would be £16 billion. His proposals, described in the journal as "politically neutral", were condemned by the National Union of Teachers as "the ravings of a crackpot academic."

The biggest problem would be privatizing schools, since teachers have no management experience.

State Expenditure: A Study in Waste, in *Economic Affairs*, Volume 4 No. 3, published by Longman for the Institute of Economic Affairs, 2 Lord North Street London SW1, annual subscription £14.

Courses

NATIONAL COURSES 1984

The National Committee for the In-Service Training of Teachers has approved the following programme of courses which will be run at colleges of education in 1984. Any enquiry regarding a listed course should be directed to the appropriate college of education and addressed to the Secretary, In-Service Training.

Date	Course	College of Education
14 May-16 May 1984	The Construction and Processing of Curriculum - NC2	Dundee College of Education
25 June-29 June 1984	Resource Based Learning in the Secondary School - NC9	St Andrew's College of Education (Barnard Castle Campus)
2 July-6 July 1984	Electronics and Microelectronics in the Secondary School - NC8	St Andrew's College of Education (Barnard Castle Campus)
3 Sept.-7 Sept. 1984	Expressive Arts in the Primary School - NC2	Dundee College of Education
10 Sept.-14 Sept. 1984	Home Economics in Education - NC1	Jordanhill College of Education
10 Sept.-14 Sept. 1984	Priorities in Management - NC8	Murray House College of Education
17 Sept.-21 Sept. 1984	Language and Learning in the years 10-14 - NC6	Aberdeen College of Education
17 Sept.-21 Sept. 1984	Environmental Studies in the Primary School - NC1	Aberdeen College of Education
17 Sept.-21 Sept. 1984	Curriculum Liaison between Primary and Secondary Schools - NC4	Aberdeen College of Education
17 Sept.-21 Sept. 1984	Social Subjects in S1/S2 - NC10	Jordanhill College of Education
17 Sept.-21 Sept. 1984	Continuing Education for Young People with Special Educational Needs - NC3	Jordanhill College of Education
29 Nov.-30 Nov. 1984	Organisation for Learning and Teaching in the Primary School - NC9	Jordanhill College of Education

MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING

On 3rd February this year, *The Times Educational Supplement* published a 12 page feature on modern language teaching. This feature includes articles on the Foreign Language at Work scheme, understanding comprehension, a report from the National Congress on Languages in Education, and contributions from David Rowles, Chairman of the CENESC, Dr Gedric Thimann, tutor in French to the Nottingham University Adult Education Department and Bob Powell, Lecturer in Education at Bath University School of Education.

This feature is now available in reprint form price 80p. To obtain your copy please send a cheque/postal order (no cash please) made payable to Times Newspapers Limited to:

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NEWS

Class sizes fall as costs rise in most authorities

by Mike Durham

Average pupil teacher ratios in schools are continuing to improve, against a background of rising costs for teaching staff in most areas and wide disparities in local authority spending per child, according to new statistical estimates.

The figures on local authority spending collected annually by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) show that the biggest cuts in spending per pupil over the past year have been in inner London. Elsewhere, some local authorities have made dramatic economies but the overall picture is one of little change.

Comparative statistics for school meals indicate a steady upward trend in deprivation, although, again with the exception of inner London, the parental contribution to the meals service is rising in line with government expectations.

The average pupil teacher ratio in primary schools now varies, according to local authority, between 17.24 and 22.68 pupils per teacher, and between

13.02 and 16.78 in secondary schools. In every category of local authority, this represents a small but consistent improvement over last year as the fall in the school roll has not been matched by the loss of jobs.

The Inner London Education Authority still has the best ratio with 13.02 pupils a teacher in secondary schools, and 17.24 in primary schools. Kirklees is worst in secondary schools, with a figure of 18.73 while in the primary sector Haringey and Waverley are at the bottom of the league, with 25.65.

The gross cost per pupil to education authorities has remained almost static over the past two years, with the exception of the ILEA area where it has fallen from an average of £1,633 (secondary) to £1,600 and from £1,163 to £1,129 (primary).

But whereas the ILEA is spending an average of over £30 less per child this year compared with last, some areas, notably the metropolitan districts, are spending more. The ILEA

has particularly cut the costs of its teaching staff, but in many other areas this has actually risen.

In common with previous statistics, the CIPFA figures indicate a wide disparity in the actual spending power of local authorities - the base from which its percentage increase or decrease is taken. Last year, for example, while ILEA was planning to spend £1,600 on each secondary pupil, Dudley was spending only £866.

Outside inner London, the parental contribution towards school dinners has risen, but in the ILEA area the figure has dropped from 17.7 per cent (1982-83) to 16.7 per cent last year. The number of children who qualify for free school meals, on the other hand, has risen in average terms in all areas.

The net cost of education per head of the population is remaining almost static except in London, where the cost rose from £323.25 last year to £359.29 this year.

Local authority estimates 1983-84

	Pupil/Teacher Ratio		Gross cost per pupil		School meals revenue/cost ratio	Free meals as % of school roll
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec		
ILEA	17.24	13.02	1129	1800	18.7	31.8
Outer London Boroughs						
Barking & Dagenham	20.78	16.08	814	1072	35.5	13.9
Barnet	20.22	14.22	787	1135	40.2	8.2
Bexley	24.08	15.97	653	982	39.3	16.2
Brent	17.02	13.63	1003	1324	27.4	16.2
Bromley	22.92	15.91	717	1048	30.8	8.9
Croydon	22.17	16.69	742	1048	33.6	8.9
Ealing	18.28	14.82	808	1189	30.2	16.1
Enfield	23.41	16.36	708	1044	39.5	8.2
Haringey	17.52	13.00	1007	1402	25.8	20.4
Harrow	23.47	14.29	881	1202	35.2	7.4
Havering	23.86	16.08	686	1089	34.7	7.0
Hillingdon	21.98	15.93	786	1097	41.0	8.0
Hounslow	18.58	14.82	827	1088	30.7	16.8
Kingston-upon-Thames	21.77	16.41	715	981	40.7	7.2
Merton	21.88	17.97	779	933	27.0	7.9
Newham	19.07	13.43	836	1084	20.9	14.8
Redbridge	22.26	15.98	697	1084	42.1	6.2
Richmond-upon-Thames	20.88	18.18	767	992	25.2	9.1
Sutton	24.73	17.10	888	972	38.6	5.0
Waltham Forest	19.77	13.51	812	1248	36.3	18.1
Total	21.02	15.30	792	1110	33.6	10.8
Metropolitan Districts						
Greater Manchester						
Bolton	23.63	16.25	622	811	33.8	21.1
Bury	23.80	15.99	621	878	48.5	13.2
Manchester	21.81	15.80	781	1147	20.2	41.2
Oldham	21.11	16.89	674	980	37.2	16.5
Rochdale	22.63	14.71	698	1054	29.0	28.2
Salford	21.62	15.83	710	979	28.3	29.2
Stockport	24.22	16.81	631	894	38.9	16.2
Tameside	22.26	15.80	688	927	32.7	21.8
Trafford	20.00	16.16	848	939	35.6	15.5
Wigan	21.65	15.47	688	963	38.5	18.3
Merseyside						
Knowsley	20.28	15.12	731	1047	13.3	41.8
Liverpool	18.43	14.83	810	1063	22.2	30.1
St Helens	23.85	15.92	582	841	30.1	20.1
Sefton	23.04	16.88	660	920	33.4	18.3
Wirral	22.34	17.52	646	893	32.3	23.1
South Yorkshire						
Barnsley	21.63	16.68	770	914	31.0	17.2
Doncaster	20.07	15.78	787	981	35.0	18.8
Rotherham	22.21	18.85	681	893	33.7	18.7
Sheffield	20.43	15.84	812	1044	33.3	18.8
Tyne and Wear						
Gateshead	18.39	16.44	782	954	32.0	23.4
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	18.66	15.14	830	1088	22.4	32.3
Sunderland	20.26	14.98	740	980	37.2	16.0
South Yorkshire						
Sunderland	18.26	15.11	794	1026	25.6	23.2
Sunderland	21.88	16.04	690	922	24.0	27.0
West Midlands						
Birmingham	21.41	15.95	681	916	30.7	33.2
Coventry	22.87	16.24	731	988	22.4	28.7
Dudley	21.92	17.12	609	890	37.2	16.0
Sandwell	21.07	15.38	718	981	20.1	28.5
Solihull	23.01	16.80	675	893	42.3	12.3
Walsall	18.69	14.05	788	1084	28.3	24.4
Wolverhampton	18.62	15.02	831	1004	22.3	25.0
West Yorkshire						
Bradford	20.12	17.81	751	841	31.5	30.2
Calderdale	21.42	17.47	678	874	39.8	22.5
Kirklees	22.63	17.30	645	841	32.0	18.9
Leeds	17.51	16.76	807	885	35.1	21.3
Wakefield	22.11	17.42	631	821	32.1	18.7
Total	21.26	16.33	708	847	31.1	24.2
English counties						
Avon	23.14	16.27	682	890	40.1	18.8
Bedfordshire	23.65	17.50	628	774	34.8	10.8
Berkshire	22.62	16.00	680	876	43.0	10.8
Buckinghamshire	23.88	18.12	688	872	37.2	8.7
Cambridgeshire	23.48	16.79	636	824	46.1	12.1
Cheshire	22.47	16.88	708	866	33.3	16.1
Cleveland	21.93	16.18	678	867	28.7	27.2
Derbyshire	22.47	17.78	610	814	40.3	14.5
Cumbria	21.08	16.11	722	868	46.8	11.5
Derbyshire	22.39	17.60	659	814	39.0	14.8
Devon	23.51	17.03	818	816	38.7	12.9
Doncaster	22.78	17.12	682	800	34.2	7.5
Durham	21.54	16.88	694	802	32.0	22.8
East Sussex	21.44	16.88	681	838	45.4	12.0
Essex	24.01	17.23	624	827	35.7	8.2
Gloucestershire	22.78	17.28	636	837	40.3	14.5
Hampshire	22.72	16.88	637	817	35.6	8.6
Hertfordshire	25.85	18.01	630	801	36.8	8.6
Hertfordshire	22.29	15.88	682	888	41.4	17.9
Humber	22.47	16.77	724	831	28.7	17.8
Isle of Wight	23.87	17.12	612	805	60.0	8.4
Kent	22.38	16.88	628	828	32.0	18.7
Lancashire	22.86	16.23	677	867	45.1	13.8
Leicestershire	23.33	17.89	648	848	35.0	11.7
Lincolnshire	21.74	16.78	686	848	35.0	11.7
Norfolk	22.01	16.88	632	823	33.8	12.8
Northamptonshire	23.10	17.52	678	802	42.8	18.7
Northumbria	22.16	16.56	712	874	41.1	10.8
North Yorkshire	21.01	15.81	728	888	33.5	17.4
Oxfordshire	24.22	17.20	682	886	48.4	7.5
Shropshire	21.23	16.19	688	885	44.9	12.2
Somerset	23.60	17.52	610	814	40.3	14.5
Staffordshire	22.08	16.42	742	847	46.1	11.9
Suffolk	22.05	17.27	691	888	45.2	8.6
Surrey	21.61	16.34	881	1003	48.7	8.8
Warrickshire	22.23	17.19	688	918	38.3	8.8
West Sussex	23.23	17.18	618	816	40.0	8.8
Wiltshire	23.35	17.02	674	818	39.3	7.5
Total	22.68	16.78	686	840	40.1	12.1
Welsh Counties						
Dyfed	22.84	16.89	707	842	35.2	*
Gwent	18.74	15.04	760	1003	27.8	*
Gwynedd	18.59	15.73	701	878	43.2	*
Mid Glamorgan	20.81	16.45	742	848	34.0	*
North Glamorgan	18.58	15.98	708	1075	45.0	*
South Glamorgan	22.72	18.53	638	888	38.8	*
West Glamorgan	20.81	15.32	745	1102	38.2	*
Total	20.88	18.13	718	887	37.7	18.8
Isles of Scilly						
Total						

*Comparative figures not available

Campus standards fear on cuts

Cuts and lack of training are producing poor standards of teaching in Britain's universities, Mr Neil Stewart, president of the National Union of Students, claimed on Monday.

Mr Stewart said that more than 4,000 staff in 100 universities and colleges had

taken on an extra 50,000 students with the prospect of 200 fewer staff soon. "Standards of education cannot take such a battering without suffering," he added.

Mr Phil Woolas, the Labour candidate for the new NUS president,



CONFERENCE '84 AT BLACKPOOL

Richard Garner previews the issues and assesses the mood of this year's National Union of Teachers' delegates

Union needs to shake off the gospel of despair

Underlying this year's NUT conference will be the growing way in which the power of teachers and the local authorities has been whittled away and left the union without the influence it once had on government policy.

Mr Peter Griffin, this year's NUT president, cites three instances which show that power has moved more sharply to the centre:

● The new Technical and Vocational Education Initiative which was recently expanded threefold without any consultation with the teachers;

● Earmarking of specific grants to local authorities; and

● The potential influence upon the profession on the White Paper, *Training for Jobs*.

The executive's annual report to the conference paints the picture starkly when it says: "As to the excessive power (of the trade union movement) alleged by ministers would that they were even partly true."

"If this report shows anything, it shows that the union does not have the power it deserves when it comes to dealing with a backward looking government or obstinate employers in attempting essential reforms in working conditions or conditions of service, or in securing elementary justice on pensions, or an adherence to past declarations on teachers' pay, or - according to the teaching profession - a full respect for its expertise."

As aspects of this report show, it would be more appropriate to talk of an abuse of power by the government, than by the unions.

On pay, teachers' union deputations up and down the country have been told by their employers - the local authorities - that the reason they cannot be offered any more money is because of the tight screw placed on their budgets by the government.

This has resulted in heavy financial penalties for some of them already.

On jobs, the NUT believes there is now a very serious risk that the government's rate-capping legislation will bring forward the day when numbers of teachers are made compulsorily redundant.

This is why union leaders believe that one of the crucial debates of the conference will be on a report approved by the executive called "The Union's Overriding Priority - Your Job". It contains just one recom-

mendation - that the union gives the highest priority to the avoidance of compulsory redundancy of members and takes all necessary steps, including, where warranted, strike action, to prevent the enforced loss of livelihood of members.

If the government's attempts to reduce local authority spending have whittled away the powers of the local authorities, then it is also true that central government policies put into effect during the past year have whittled away at the power of the teachers' unions to influence what goes on in the classrooms.

The most obvious example of this is the disbanding of the Schools Council - described by Mr Griffin as "a genuine independent forum for curriculum development because it had accountable teacher representatives."

The NUT has decided to boycott the two new bodies set up to replace it - the School Curriculum Development Committee and the Secondary Examinations Council - because they were only asked to make nominations to the two bodies and given no guarantee that their nominees would be selected by Sir Keith.

Leaders of the union believe their action has been vindicated by the fact that the rival National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers did nominate for both bodies, in the face of TUC opposition to such a move, and was ignored.

However, the union abandoned its opposition to taking up the two places it was granted on the Advisory Committee for the Supply and Education of Teachers - despite an earlier boycott.

Said Mr Griffin, one of the representatives: "I feel we've made a constructive contribution to that committee, and it has given us a marvellous opportunity to make a positive contribution."

So, if the traditional channels of influence that the NUT sought to use to persuade the government to alter or introduce policy have been cut off or changed, what is left open to the union?

Locally, the NUT has been successful in negotiations with some of the 104 local education authorities in England and Wales - winning agreements out of them on the use of fixed-term contracts (as in Liverpool and ILEA, for instance), maternity leave (Not-

tinghamshire) and reducing the number of teachers' jobs to be lost as a result of depopulations to 14 different local authorities.

"If there is one thing I would like us to do more than anything else it is to reverse this terrible period that we're in, where we feel we're not able to influence what's going on around us, and that we need to keep our heads down," said Mr Griffin.

"I want to be able to raise a commitment right throughout the union to work very hard for an improvement in the maintained education system."

To this end, the union is intending relaunching the campaign "Our Children, Our Future", to put education firmly back on the political map during the summer.

"We must get rid of this malaise that has afflicted the whole of the trade union movement."

"People feel there's an inability to change things. That's the gospel of despair and it's got to be changed."

● Without doubt, it is not just the NUT that has been out in the cold since May 3, 1979 when Mrs Thatcher came to power. The Government is remarkably indifferent to pressure groups of all kinds, including the CBI, David Little writes.

Meetings between civil servants and NUT officials still continue as before but the union cannot now use what some officials saw as the "blackmail" of pre-Tory days when, in the face of civil servant opposition, they'd threaten to go over the mandarins' heads to ministers. It would be unrealistic for them to threaten that now.

As former union president, Max Morris puts it: "Influence was undoubtedly stronger in the seventies when the Schools Council was in existence and when there were Labour governments for half the time, and the TUC was a real power and influenced major government decisions. Locally, though, the NUT is as strong and effective as ever."

"The NUT's action policy, stupidly and bitterly attacked by the ultra left for not being strong enough but in reality feared by the local authorities, has been a unique success in the trade union movement. What other unions can boast that up till now it has had no compulsory redundancies of full time members? It's almost a miracle."

Focus on women's career needs

by Hilary Wilce

The NUT, with women comprising two-thirds of its membership, has taken the first steps over the past few years in acknowledging the specific needs of this majority within the union.

This year's conference will consider eight pages of close print recommending action for improving the career development of women teachers, for increasing women's role in the union, and for eliminating discrimination in the curriculum. The feeling is that the memorandum will go through, its 16 recommendations virtually un-

resistance to taking equal opportunities issues seriously down at school level and from men members who have not listened to the arguments, "although we get a lot of sympathy and support from those who have been involved for some time."

The Birmingham association has introduced an equal opportunities element into its training for school representatives, has put an equal opportunities newsletter into every school once a term, and has published a leaflet on maternity rights.

NEWS

NOTICEBOARD

PEOPLE...



Russell Martin



Norman Drummond

SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS
Mr Daniel Sullivan to be head of St Wilfrid's RC primary school, West Sussex.
Mr Russell Martin to be head of Rockfield Manor primary school, Greenwich.
Mr Darrell Farrant to be head of Abbotsholme School, Derbyshire.
The Rev Norman Drummond to be head of Loretto School, Midlothian, Scotland, in succession to Mr David McIlrath, who

becomes head of Oundle School in September.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS
Mr Frank Judd, director of Voluntary Services Overseas, to be director of Oxfam, in succession to Mr Guy Stringer, who retires next year.
Ms Sheila Innes, head of continuing education, BBC TV, to be BBC's Controller, educational broadcasting, in succession to Donald Grant, who retires in July.
Lady Avelbury, a former chairman of the National Marriage Guidance Council and assistant director of MIND, to be chairman of Family Service Units, in succession to Sir Arthur Peterson.
Mr Thomas Mulholland to be assistant education officer (youth and community) with Richmond upon Thames Council.

CONFERENCES...

May 3

British Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa day conference for teachers at the Isledon Teachers' Centre, Blackstock Road, London HA. A briefing on apartheid education in South Africa and Namibia will be followed by an examination of teaching materials. Details from British Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, Canon Collins House, 2nd Floor, 64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR.

May 12

Beyond Poor Images: Child Poverty Action Group conference on how Britain's poor are treated. Speakers include Raymond Williams, Beatrice Campbell, Michael Meadowcroft, MP, and Peter Townsend at the City University, St John Street, London EC1, 10.15 am-1 pm. Tickets £21.

unwaged). Details from Alan Booth, CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2.

Juveniles. Youth Offenders and Justice: a conference for magistrates, probation officers and community youth workers to look at current issues arising from the Criminal Justice Act 1982 at the University of London, Malet Street, London, WC1. Fee £20. Details from Miss P. Lazenby, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square, London WC1.

"Special Children—Special needs: the National conference of the British Association for Early Childhood Education at the College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham. Details from the Secretary, BAEE, Montgomery Hall, Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SW.

EVENTS...

April 21, 25, 26, 28

Children's activities at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter include an Easter egg decorating competition and sessions on the museum's natural history and costume collections. Details from the museum, Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3RX.

May 3

A Day of Environmental Education Resources from 11 am to 7.30 pm at the Bordesley Centre, Stratford Road, Birmingham organized by the Birmingham Environmental Studies Association and Birmingham Education Committee. The exhibition will bring together a large range of national and regional organizations who provide curricular advice, fieldwork equipment, micro software and other resources. Details from Paul Archer, The

Urban Base, Bordesley Centre, Camp Hill, Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1AR.

May 5
A study day organized by the Royal Opera House Education Department and the University of London Department of Extra-Mural Studies on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Britten's operatic version. Tickets price £6 are available in advance only by post. Application forms from Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DD.

May 8, 9, 15 and 16

Royal Institution MacRobert Lecture for sixth-forms: *Chemistry and Archaeology* by Professor Henry Tyrrell at 5.30 pm. Details from Lectures Secretary, The Royal Institution, 21 Albermarle Street, London W1.

May 12

Leeds University Open Day from 9 am to 5 pm: more than 70 departments will be putting on free displays, exhibitions and demonstrations. Details from the Information Office, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

COMPETITIONS...

Teenagers are asked to design a game about architecture in a competition to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects with first prizes of £250. Individuals aged 13 to 19, or groups of not more than five may enter. The game, which may be played with cards, words, actions, on a board or computer by one person or a number, should be original, appealing to young people, and educational; it should increase an awareness of British

architecture and architects, past and present. Ideas for the competition in words, sketches or diagrams on not more than two sheets of A4 paper should be sent to the Events office at RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD, who will answer further enquiries. Closing date June 29.

The subject of this year's National Gallery children's painting competition is *From My Window*. Children are invited to paint a real or imaginary scene, such as the view from their bedroom or classroom windows, the bus or train, or even through a porthole. The first prize is £100 to be spent at Hamley's toyshop. Runners-up will each receive art materials to the value of £10. Prizewinners and runners-up will have their work on exhibition at the National Gallery. Closing date May 11. Details from "See I Paint", The Education Department, The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS...

Information Exchange

This information pamphlet, produced by a group of experienced teachers and advisers throughout the country who work with handicapped children with little or no sight, contains ideas, articles, and other useful information concerning the education and management of multi-handicapped children. The latest issue discusses approaches to the curriculum. The annual subscription is £1.50 and cheques made payable to Information Exchange should be sent to Miss Jackie Williams, 3 Hurlers Court, Dean Street, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 4AJ.

Compiled by Mary Crulshank

SCHOOL TO WORK

Firms hit by hard-up schools' hard sell

Firms in some parts of the country are complaining of cut-throat competition from schools which are selling goods and services produced by their pupils. Some schools are said to be making five-figure profits out of the businesses they run.

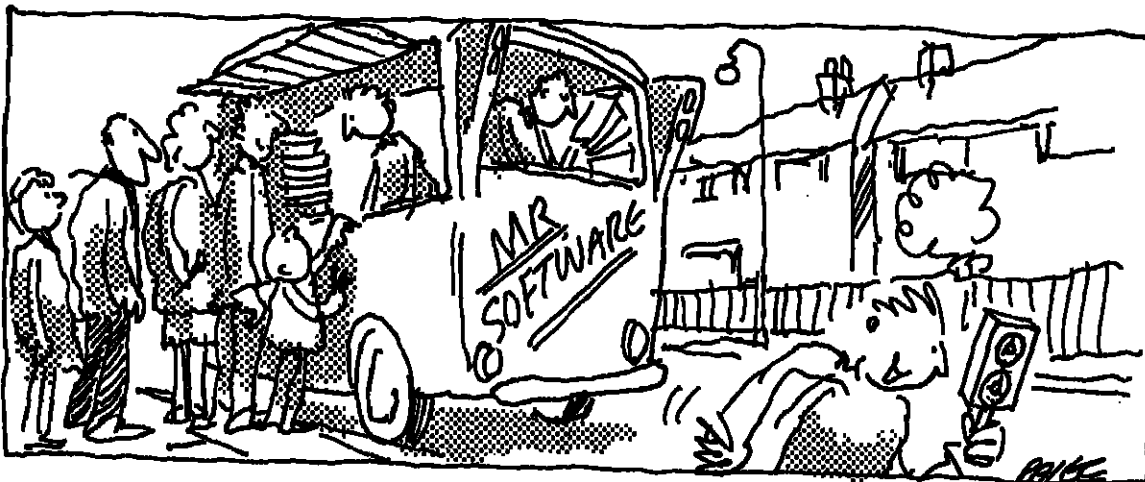
One in every six secondary schools in England and Wales is thought to have set up some kind of "mini-enterprise", all of them ostensibly for the purpose of teaching pupils how business works. But reports to the School Curriculum Industry Project (formerly the Schools Council Industry Project) suggest that many schools are now using their companies primarily as money spinners rather than as educational tools.

SCIP fears that their activities could prejudice attempts to forge closer links between the school system and industry, and is preparing guidelines, with the help of the CBI and the TUC, on how such enterprises should be conducted.

Its director, Dr Ian Jamieson, told a recent CRAC conference that some of the schools had discovered that it was not difficult for schools to make net profits of thousands of pounds a year and warned "in the current parlous state of school financing, this can be a very considerable temptation." Many schools, he says, are using their profits to buy textbooks which their local authority no longer provides.

The most lucrative field, says Dr Jamieson, seems to be in computer consultancy and software: the schools advise businessmen on what computers to buy and how to use them, and then write programs for the system tailored to the firm's needs.

In the case of one school, which Dr Jamieson says is making about £40,000



a year, the programs are being written by a fifth-year CSE pupil, who the school has considered is not bright enough to be entered for O levels.

Other schools are buying stationery at bulk discounts and packaging it in smaller quantities for resale. One school prints letter headings for local firms on its offset press.

Many schools, particularly in the shire counties, run market stalls at which they sell goods made by their pupils in direct competition with local traders.

"What we are finding is that firms who are quite happy for a school to run a stall for a few weeks lose patience when they see it becoming a permanent venture," he says.

The firms have reason to worry because schools are in a position to undercut their prices substantially since they get the pupils' labour for

little or nothing. This applies particularly in the computer field, where labour makes up virtually the whole cost of producing programs.

Although some of the schools pay the pupils, it is often simply a token

Edited by
Mark Jackson

amount: the majority beneficiary is usually school funds. Some schools do make a notional charge for overheads such as accommodation, heating, and lighting, but if they do not it is easy to produce a huge return on the amount of capital involved.

Dr Jamieson says that there is evidence that where schools emphasize profitability at all costs it produces some questionable practices—such as

high pressure selling, a disregard for health and safety, and even, where the school has set up rival companies, a degree of industrial espionage and sabotage, which, says Dr Jamieson, recalls Mr Edward Heath's reference to "the unacceptable face of capitalism".

Emphasis on profit making is frequently at the expense of providing learning opportunities for the pupils, the reports received by SCIP suggest: teachers may take a much more directive role to avoid the possibility of disasters, and it means that pupils get less opportunity to learn from mistakes.

The enterprises, claims Dr Jamieson, particularly attract the small group among teachers "who have half a mind to leave teaching and join the wealth-creating sector of the economy".

Midland Bank plc, Courtwood House, Silver Street Head, Sheffield S13 3KD.

With the Women in Science and Honour degree in Banking and Finance at Loughborough (normal banking grades BSC or AA-AB).

Before starting the course, successful applicants follow one year's accelerated training on full pay with the bank, along with six weeks' training each summer vacation.

On completion of the course they return to the bank for further training with good opportunities for promotion. The closing date for applications this year is September 30 and full details are available from: The Manager, Group Graduate Recruitment,

MSC in the dark over missing youngsters

The Manpower Services Commission admitted this week that it still does not really know where most of the youngsters who have left their Youth Training Scheme places without completing their training have gone.

Ministers and the Commission's chiefs have rebuffed outsiders, like Labour MPs, who have alleged that many of the youngsters are so disillusioned by their taste of the scheme that they prefer unemployment. They have told the critics that it is likely that most of the youngsters have either moved into jobs or to other YTS places.

Officials supplied the Youth Training Board this week with figures based on a survey of a quarter of the MSC area offices.

The offices did not know where 50 per cent of the youngsters had gone, although they believed they were in other YTS schemes. They knew only 6 per cent of those who had moved in this way, of another 34 per cent who had found work, and of 2 per cent back in full time education.

Nearly half of a 2,000-strong sample of youngsters did not reply to a questionnaire sent them. Of those who did, 29 per cent were in another YTS scheme, 38 per cent in jobs, 6 per cent in education, and 24 per cent unemployed. Four per cent were working for their former YTS employer.

Some 75,000 youngsters or 22 per cent of cumulative YTS entrants had left the scheme by the end of February.

much some courses overlap a number of professional bodies.

The civil engineering course at Cardiff (UWIST), for example, also gives exemptions from professional exams in public health, water and municipal engineering. At Derbyshire College of Higher Education, electrical engineering exempts from the Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers and Aeronautical engineering at Loughborough gives some exemptions in mechanical engineering.

Details of sandwich courses and professional examinations are now provided in *Professional and Vocational Degree Course Offers 1984-85* Careers Consultants, 12, Hill Rise, Richmond, Surrey

Competency tests raise a storm down South

UNITED STATES

Arkansas teachers must pass an exam or be sacked. Peter David reports

The American preoccupation with the need to improve the quality of its teachers has taken an astonishing turn in the state of Arkansas. While most states have been dangling the carrot of higher pay to attract better recruits, Arkansas has decided to wield a stick to get rid of teachers who are incompetent.

Following the passage of a controversial law last November, every teacher, principal and school superintendent will, some time this year, have to sit an exam to prove basic competence in reading, writing and arithmetic. If they fail, they will lose their jobs.

Act 76, as the law is known locally, is an extreme example of a trend in the southern states to increase the amount of testing teachers must undergo. A recent survey found that 30 states had adopted some form of teacher competency testing to screen new entrants and identify the weaknesses of those already teaching. But the Arkansas law, which will enable the state to fire senior teachers on the basis of the single written test, has outraged teachers.

According to the Arkansas Education Association (AEA), many teachers have been taking early retirement or are leaving for other states to avoid the indignity of sitting the proposed exam. The union complains that Act 76, by requiring serving teachers to prove that they are not illiterate, has undermined public confidence in the schools and weakened pupils' respect for their teachers. The union has warned that when the test is ready, many teachers may refuse to take it. The teachers have received considerable support from educational testing experts. The Princeton-based Educational Testing Service has announced that it will not allow its tests to be used



in the Arkansas exam. Its president, Mr Gregory Arritt, said it was a perversion of testing procedures to use tests in the manner intended by Arkansas.

He added: "It seems just plain wrong to tell someone who has been judged a satisfactory teacher for 10 or 20 years that the passing of one test on one day is necessary to keep his or her job or salary as a teacher."

Although it has won support from a considerable number of Arkansas parents, Act 76 is regarded by educational administrators in other states as unnecessary. According to the AEA, all teachers in the state's secondary schools are graduates and one in three has a master's degree. They must all have passed the national teachers examination before starting their careers, and state law provides for evaluation of their classroom performance at least once a year. In addition, Arkansas teachers are employed on one-year contracts with no guarantee that their employment will be renewed.

The AEA's affiliate, the National Education Association, claimed last

week that the Arkansas law would waste money as well as penalize teachers. An NEA committee of inquiry returned from the state recently to report that money could be better spent tackling other chronic education problems. Teacher salaries in Arkansas, for example, are the second lowest in the country. Only 38 per cent of its high school graduates go on to higher education, compared with a national average of 53 per cent. And 170 of the 367 school districts in the state do not offer foreign languages.

Following the publication last year of the Reagan administration's influential report on Excellence in Education, Arkansas Governor William Clinton announced plans to raise teacher salaries by an average of 3.1 per cent. But the promise was accompanied by his proposal to test all serving teachers.

So far the tests have not been written, and the state has not decided what proportion of serving teachers it expects to fail. The fear of the teachers' unions is that the governor would lose face if the exams led to no sacking. As a result, the state may set its competence standards artificially high.

The Supreme Court has never said that children cannot pray in schools; as one senator joked, "as long as there are matras tests students will be praying". Trouble starts, however, when government gets into the prayer business itself. What prayer should be required? senators asked during the debate. A doctrinaire appeal would powerfully offend those who hold different doctrines; and a watered-down prayer would offend those with the most strongly-held religious beliefs.

One way out, requiring a moment of silence, would have solved some of these problems but that was unacceptable to the pro-prayer partisans.

The version of the prayer amendment on which Congress voted forbade state or federal officials from composing the prayers, leaving that task to the children themselves. But the notion of picking prayers by majority vote of Miss Jones's third-graders is hardly problem-free.

That is the lesson the Senate learned in its debate. And that is why one Republican Senator, himself an Episcopalian priest, spoke out against the amendment: that is also why another senator, also a Republican, could recall how badly he felt, as a Jewish schoolboy, during the recital of prayers; and that, in the end, why the Senate rejected the prayer measure.

Protecting property

NETHERLANDS

Lynn George on a campaign to end vandalism

Amsterdam city council is spending about £98,000 this year on launching an anti-vandalism campaign. The money will be used to implement the recommendations of a report which followed an intensive, three-year study of the problem in two of the city's districts.

Amsterdam, like other cities in Europe, has been hit badly by vandalism. In 1981, more than £11m worth of damage was done to public property, while a staggering 140,000 cases of vandalism to private property totalling some £20m was recorded. In a city with well under 1 million inhabitants vandalism costs about £50 per household per year.

The Amsterdam study consisted of a number of controls and anti-vandalism experiments carried out in a typically old and a typically new neighbourhood. Over the three years, vandalism fell by 25 per cent, while the rest of Amsterdam showed a 5 per cent increase for the same period.

The study initially involved interviewing more than 200 boys and girls about vandalism. Two out of three admitted acts of vandalism while most cases were in the 8 to 16 age group. Revenge, anger and boredom were the motivations of the younger age

groups. Most of the older children who were destructive actively hated school and were generally dissatisfied with their lot. Older children who belonged to youth centres, but who felt they were not involved there, were more destructive than those who felt they were.

While no link was found between vandalism and social background, an exception was found between vandalism and youngsters whose parents exercised little control.

Experiments such as making the targets for attack (like street lighting) of stronger materials, and providing a workshop where young people could tinker with motorbikes, had all helped reduce vandalism. But things like extra police patrols had little effect.

The most successful experiments were those aimed at giving young people more responsibility for their environment—for example, helping to design a new playground, and in-school projects aimed at vandalism prevention.

The report recommends giving young people far more influence in the running of their schools—sitting on school councils, helping to organize activities and taking care of equipment.

Amsterdam is to introduce the most successful of the experiments, initially in areas with the worst vandalism, and is to investigate the causes of school fires (£5m worth of damage a year) and the possibility of introducing alternative punishments for vandals.

Pay as you learn

TURKEY

Bernard Kennedy on the policy to reduce costs by bringing in fees

Turkey's prestigious Anatolian high schools are soon to become fee-paying as part of the new Government's policy of reducing education costs.

With fees about to be levied on university students for the first time, the controversial proposal represents another step away from the traditional republican principle of free education.

The Anatolian high schools are the state sector's showpiece. The quality of education they offer is well above that found in most secondary schools, especially in foreign languages, and entry is by a fiercely-contested national examination taken by 90,000 students every year.

Graduates of these schools have a far better chance than their contemporaries of gaining university places and top jobs, and although most of the children have middle-class backgrounds, the schools have enabled many poorer children to improve their lot.

Whether this can continue once fees are introduced is doubtful, but Education Ministry officials stress that no fee-scales have yet been fixed, and that exceptions will be made for poor and specially-gifted pupils.

Opposition to the introduction of fees can be expected not only on ideological grounds but also from

parents of children currently studying at the schools, who will be obliged to pay for a service they are at present obtaining free of charge.

Supporters of the move argue that the change will help the Ministry, which enjoys the second-largest slice of the national budget after defence, to set up more of the high schools and thus meet the ever-rising demand for places.

However, the introduction of fees must also be viewed as an extension of the Government of Mr Turgut Ozal emphasis on private capital and market forces. The Ministry recently gave private schools permission to increase their charges substantially in the next academic year, and there is talk of fees being levied in other areas of the state system.

The exam season is well under way, and the usual complaints about over-worked children, inconvenient dates, over-emphasis on book knowledge and inaccurate questions. Particular scepticism has been aroused by a question in the national examination for entry to science high schools. "What does permanent and true happiness consist of?" 14-year-olds were asked, the alternatives supplied including "being healthy", "not harming anybody" or "being turned by anybody" and "being useful to people in line with God's orders while refraining from what is forbidden."

Much to the disgust of opponents of religious education, re-introduced in state schools only two years ago, the last turned out to be the "correct" response.

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Careers Diary



by Brian Heap

Careers in accountancy and finance have proved to be increasingly attractive to sixth-formers during recent years. Five years ago there were about 12 applicants for each place, now the average is nearer 19. In the university sector there are 28 applicants for each place at Lancaster, 29 at Hull and 30 at Loughborough, while the polytechnics at Oxford, City, Birmingham, Bristol and Leeds can each claim over 20 for each place.

Unfortunately, there are only six commercial or industrial organizations prepared to sponsor students through university or polytechnic for accountancy (see *The Job Book*, Hobson Press). In banking, only the Midland Bank operates an annual scheme for

sixth-formers.

As in previous years the Midland is again looking for "exceptional" young men and women to take the BSc honours degree in Banking and Finance at Loughborough (normal banking grades BSC or AA-AB).

Before starting the course, successful applicants follow one year's accelerated training on full pay with the bank, along with six weeks' training each summer vacation.

On completion of the course they return to the bank for further training with good opportunities for promotion. The closing date for applications this year is September 30 and full details are available from: The Manager, Group Graduate Recruitment,

Midland Bank plc, Courtwood House, Silver Street Head, Sheffield S13 3KD.

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OVERSEAS

A woman most likely to lead

AUSTRALIA

Luis Garcia on Senator Susan Ryan's first year of office

Senator Susan Ryan, the Federal Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, was once nominated by the most eminent of Australian historians, Professor Manning Clark, as the candidate most likely to become this country's first woman prime minister.

But not everyone shares Professor Clark's confidence in, and admiration for, the senator.

Not too long ago, for example, an influential fundamentalist religious group took out full-page advertisements in leading daily newspapers, describing Senator Ryan as a "Socialist juggernaut" intent on becoming Australia's "feminist dictator".

Senator Ryan, a self-proclaimed socialist and feminist, does have prime ministerial ambitions, but she will tell you that for the time being she is quite happy with her present job.

She took over the normally staid education portfolio a little over a year ago, after the 1983 Federal elections which saw the Labour Party return to power in Canberra after almost eight years in opposition.

She is said to have gone to Mr Robert Hawke, the Labour leader, just before the election, and demanded that if the party won she be given a "real job" in the cabinet, and not just a token one.

She has managed to bring to education her reformist zeal at almost all levels within the department, from administration (by appointing the first woman secretary in the Australian



Senator Susan Ryan

public service), to the curricula of many schools by introducing special arts programmes for girls, and a national computer education programme.

But what has made the 42-year-old senator a figure to watch has been her single-minded determination to implement her party's policies in two very sensitive areas: government assistance to independent schools, and the opening up of tertiary institutions, especially the more conservative universities, to lower-income and disadvantaged students.

One of her first big announcements, less than two months after the election,

was a 25 per cent reduction in government funds to 41 of the wealthiest private schools in the country, including such well-known Australian establishments as Sydney Grammar, the Kings School, and Melbourne Grammar.

This area is seen within the government as a very sensitive one politically, and there have been some rumours of disquiet among backbenchers that Senator Ryan, Labour's first female cabinet minister and only the third in Australian history, has been less than successful in defusing criticism about the cuts.

But others within the Government will tell you that she has courageously borne the brunt of a right-wing backlash inspired by the Government's genuine attempt to redress inequities in the education system.

Senator Ryan admits that the campaign waged against her by private school heads has surprised her.

She told a Melbourne newspaper a few weeks ago: "I didn't have any idea to do with developing the party's education policies because I haven't been involved in education in the last few years, so I don't know why they have decided to attribute them to some sort of radical feminist fantasy I've had."

"These proposals have not even been particularly radical. Any Labour government, or any government with social conscience is going to engage in redistribution where there is so much inequality." The critics have claimed that Senator Ryan is out to starve the private schools of money. They say her background as an officer of the pro-government schools, Australian Council of State School Organizations, and

Labour Party "debts" to the teacher unions, mean she is biased against private schools.

Senator Ryan scoffs and says the facts speak for themselves: The Government has increased money to the majority of private schools, especially the poorer Roman Catholic parish schools, and reduced the grants only to the 41 richer schools.

Her fighting Irish tradition is strong, and she has been quoted as saying that you cannot get any real social improvement unless people fight for it because "when people have privileges they will hang on to them like grim death".

Senator Ryan was educated at a Bridgeway Convent in Sydney. At one time she sang in the same congregational choir as another lapsed-Catholic-turned-feminist, Germaine Greer. This Irish Catholic tradition has endeared her to at least some of the Catholic educationists.

At a recent dinner in Sydney, senior archbishop in the Australian Church embarrassed Senator Ryan by proclaiming her a symbol of the revival in Irish scholarship, beauty, wit and elegance.

The senator's political evolution since the days at the convent follow what at first appears a well-defined course: She married at 20, became a teacher at 22, a mother of two at 23, a lapsed Catholic at 24, and divorced at the age of 31. Her former husband, Mr Richard Butler, is now Australia's Ambassador for disarmament in Geneva.

At 32 she was elected to the local house of assembly in the Australian Capital Territory, and at 33 to the national Senate. She became a minister last year, aged 41.

Switch to British-style staff centres

SPAIN

Sarah Jane Evans on an attempt to raise teaching standards

The Spanish Education Ministry is to set up a network of teachers' centres, based on the British model, Senator Jose Maria Maravall, the Educational Minister, who has spent time in England and sends his children to the bilingual British Institute, is introducing features of the British system into a predominantly continental model.

The object of the centres, he says, will be information; practice, giving teachers the chance to acquire new skills; collaboration, enabling teachers to work together on new projects; dissemination and assistance, helping teachers to hone their teaching; and curriculum development.

Previously, teachers have relied on the university institutes of education (ICE). These were created in 1970, as part of a widespread reform of education, which had been long overdue. The job of the ICEs, which were to be attached to each of the universities and answerable to the Ministry, was teacher training and research.

Individual institutes have had great successes, but overall they have suffered from being underfunded, and from interference from the Ministry, and consequent lack of public support.

Many teachers are sceptical about the new Centros de Profesores, especially if they are as underfunded as their predecessors. There is no doubt, though, that they could be more successful, especially if a large network of local centres is set up.

The emphasis on in-service training and curriculum development is new to most teachers. Much of it has come only in the last year and it is clearly unsatisfactory to the profession.

"The current system of appointing staff to schools means that an appreciable number are not in the school - or city - of their choice. They are not committed to their schools, and view with discontent the recent suggestion that teachers' holidays should be reduced to those of all other civil servants, and that they should remain on site longer. Thus, for an influential sector of the profession, teachers' centres will be of scant concern."

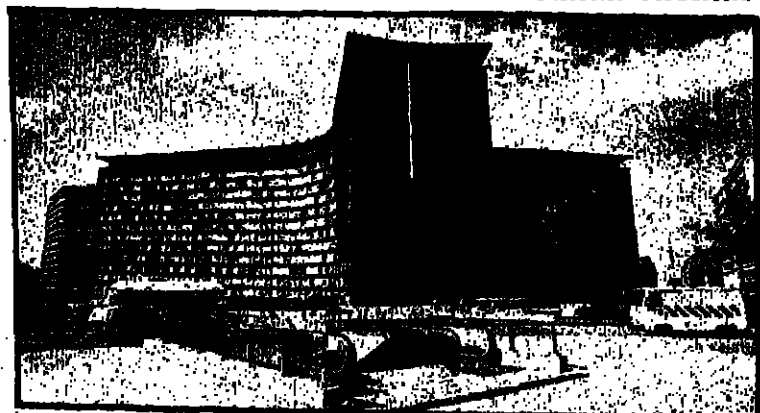
The continuing problem, then, for the bureaucrats is how to implement top-level decisions at the grassroots. An example of this has just arisen in Andalusia, one of several autonomous regions which has developed powers over education.

The Education Department of the Andalusian Junta decided at the end of the last year to send out a parcel of books, a mini-library, to the 40 per cent of schools in the region which had no library. A pack of 475 titles was put together for each of the more than 1,000 schools, selected by the department on the criterion that they should be "principally for the pupil and not for the teacher". The books included reference works, fiction, scientific books and various categories of general non-fiction. Among them was a specially selected book on sex education.

Now, some months later, a number of schools have not received their parcels. Of those that have, many have not unpacked them, because they do not have a room to put them in, or because they lack the staff to have responsibility for them. Where the books are being used in library rooms, it is usually because the parents' association has taken an interest, or some teachers have given up their free time to catalogue and issue the books.

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Gillian Thomas



Strasbourg Parliament meets one week in four.

Meeting industry on equal terms

Sir - Reason having replaced rhetoric with the publication of the latest HMI report *Education for Employees* we may at last see if there is any truth in the allegations of poor liaison between industry and education.

Perhaps it was the vehemence of their accusations, or their lofty sources, but so far there seems to have been little response from the service to what appear to be largely unsubstantiated charges of lack of curriculum relevance in further education (White Paper: "Training for Jobs").

Many headteachers of schools, and an even greater number of principals of colleges, spend considerable time, effort and money in establishing and fostering links with employers. One does not have to look far for the plethora of local, regional and national initiatives designed to bring the sides together. Similarly, examining and validating bodies such as the Business and Technician Education Council and

the City and Guilds London Institute give great weight to employer consultation, participation and views in developing their course models and programmes.

As the HMI report clarifies, in FE this education/employment exchange can be achieved through the now "traditional" network of advisory committees attached to most colleges. These provide opportunity for dialogue, the sharing of problems and the exploration of initiatives.

Some colleges such as ours go further and require their advisory committees to elect governors of the college, thus ensuring access to the "top table". Others go even further and have discovered that, with goodwill, employers can probably be encouraged to become directly involved in specialist curriculum planning, evaluation and even student assessment. The report indicates that in its survey 77 per cent of links were either adequate or

good. If we are really saying that there is tangible evidence that these many initiatives are not bringing the needs of industry to the attention of education we should perhaps be looking elsewhere for the cause.

In simplistic terms we should perhaps accept that, traditionally, neither side has much respect for the other. Educators tend to view employers as being narrow and largely motivated by profit. This jaundiced view is well matched by the reverse attitude that educators are pampered, protected and precious.

Only if one side accepts the language of the other can any genuine progress be made. It is really too much to ask that we cast aside our threadbare Mr Chips image and replace it with an aggressive professionalism based on good practice and conviction? Must we continue to pander to those who would have us reassemble the irrelevant and

outmoded values of the nineteenth century at the expense of those of the twenty-first century? Can we not simply peel off the mystique of teaching in which we have wrapped ourselves for countless generations but which only serves to enhance our privilege?

The application of the MSC purgative has so far not been guaranteed beyond 1986 and there is already evidence that the medicine trying to clear out a basically healthy system is creating more problems than it is solving. But the solution is in our own hands.

Quite simply what I am calling for is a degree of unity and a willingness to openly and confidently show about our success and to create Captains of Education to match those in industry on a basis of mutual respect.

K W RUDDIMAN
Principal
Wakefield District College

In defence...

Sir - Although certainly no champion of the present Government's education policies, I feel that I must defend the proposed Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education courses, criticized by Mr Max Morris (TES, March 30).

It appears to me that Mr Morris's criticisms are based on the fact that the examining board for these courses will be, in the main, controlled by the City and Guilds of London Institute and the Business and Technician Education Council. Surely this point, although, perhaps, of passing interest to educational observers is of little concern to the prospective clients of such courses?

As a member of a teaching team presently involved in the development of a CPVE programme; and a former employment adviser with the Manpower Services Commission, I believe that the CPVE is an initiative which will genuinely increase the occupational life chances of those students involved.

While not being able to speak for all such proposed courses, I would like to outline some of the advantages that our particular CPVE programme provides.

Initially, the course is firmly, locally vocationally based, offering each individual a comprehensive range of work experiences and, consequently, employer contact. In addition to these, the student has an opportunity to gain further "formal" qualifications to O level standard in up to six subjects.

The progressive teaching methods involved are much more geared to the needs of the individual, and to some extent, the local employment market. With these factors in mind we have incorporated a comprehensive profiling system. This both enables the individual student to make his or her own relevant career choices, and assists others in the guidance and counselling of the students at a crucial time in the transition from chalkface to workplace.

I have no doubt that Mr Morris's shrewd observations on the political machinations behind such courses are accurate. Yet, what he must remain aware of is the fact that these CPVE programmes, if properly set up at local level, can be of immeasurable benefit to youngsters, and often less able youngsters at that, facing the harsh realities of life after school.

Now, some months later, a number of schools have not received their parcels. Of those that have, many have not unpacked them, because they do not have a room to put them in, or because they lack the staff to have responsibility for them. Where the books are being used in library rooms, it is usually because the parents' association has taken an interest, or some teachers have given up their free time to catalogue and issue the books.

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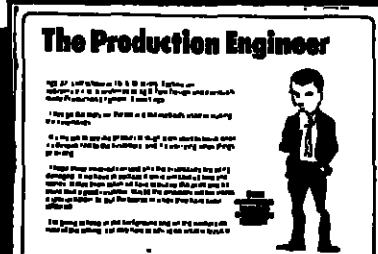
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Better balance

Sir - In my capacity as chairman of the literature, arts and publicly working party of the Engineering Careers Information Service I would like to reply to Elizabeth Allen's letter (TES, March 2).

I very much hope that her criticisms of the Quality Circle project will not inhibit the use of this highly successful aid to help bridge the gap between schools and industry. This project is based on material produced by Mrs Pat Parker of the Noel Baker School, Derby, whilst on secondment to the engineering industry. It provides an opportunity for young people in a school or college to learn through role playing about a number of occupations in the engineering industry such as assembly worker, supervisor, quality controller, storekeeper and production engineer.

Those schools where the project has been used have found this role-playing aspect particularly attractive. The project can lead to a valuable understanding of the need for quality circles in our



Sexist pack

Sir - It was with interest that I read of The TES Engineering Essay Competition for teachers and careers officers, sponsored jointly by TES and the Engineering Council.

While not being able to speak for all such proposed courses, I would like to outline some of the advantages that our particular CPVE programme provides.

Initially, the course is firmly, locally vocationally based, offering each individual a comprehensive range of work experiences and, consequently, employer contact. In addition to these, the student has an opportunity to gain further "formal" qualifications to O level standard in up to six subjects.

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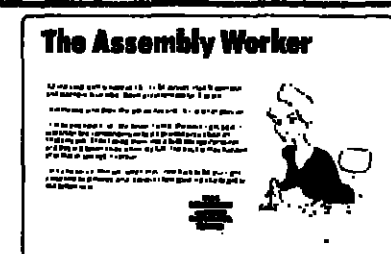
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points in the hierarchy: production engineer, quality controller and supervisor. Although the woman possesses the same CSE passes, she occupies a position inferior to that of the supervisor, who has no examination passes.

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In parentis...

Sir - We were interested to read the PACT Committee letter (TES, March 30) and the article by Nick Wood (February 17) which give the impression that few Sheffield schools are actively encouraging parental involvement in children's reading.

There are, in fact, a number of Sheffield primary schools which have developed extremely efficient parental involvement schemes such as the Fox-hill Project.

In our own school two schemes are in operation. One involves the children reading at home with their parents on a daily basis with teachers visiting to observe, help and monitor progress. The other involves second years in paired reading also, but in this scheme the help and monitoring is done by parents coming into school one morning per week to discuss the daily reading which has been taking place at home during the previous week. Parents also take part in a reading and language session within the classroom. Where parents cannot come into school, the children are paired with children from our fourth year.

We have found both schemes extremely beneficial in improving the fluency and understanding of the children involved as well as strengthening parent/child, child/child (the second scheme) relationships.

We are very proud of the excellent educational provision in Sheffield, and we would not want your readers to get the impression that ours is an area of "decaying and sometimes dangerous schools" (TES, March 23, our school being the one pictured) oblivious to the educational needs of its parents and children.

DAVID SANDILANDS
Headteacher on behalf of the staff of
Crookesmoor Middle School
Crookesmoor Road
Sheffield

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Strike for pay linked to inflation

All 180,000 teachers in the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo have been on strike for the past two weeks demanding a 70 per cent pay rise, rather than the 27 per cent the government has offered them. In a one-day protest, 50,000 teachers from all over the state, where 5,000 schools are closed, blocked traffic in the city centre.

The teachers, along with other workers paid by the state, have been some of the main victims of a new law designed to keep wages slightly below the cost of living, to curb inflation.

There have also been strikes in Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro states - all three states are controlled by parties in opposition to the central government, but which lack the money to raise the salaries of a profession which in general supports them.

Many teachers have withdrawn all their money from the Bank of Sao Paulo, into which their salaries are paid, causing difficulties in some branches. The teachers are demanding that their wages should keep pace with inflation, which has been 130 per cent over the past year.

Patrick Knight

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How language breaks boundary of graded tests

Sir - It is surprising that Mary Warnock (TES, March 16), in her article criticizing the opposition of the National Association of English Advisers to graded tests, should assert that what is true of learning foreign languages must also be true of English speakers learning English in our schools.

The baseline from which the infant teacher starts is, indeed, greatly in advance of that from which the modern linguist operates. We know that when children enter school at the age of five, most of them have already acquired the core grammar of spoken English and possess the vocabulary of more than 3,000 words.

This language has not been learned in a linear fashion with structures being built upon structures but by assimilation and experimentation. Moreover, at this stage, most have already learned to face and to respond appropriately to unforeseen linguistic circumstances.

While the teacher's rôle is to extend the purposes, contexts and audiences for which the child uses language, there is no possibility of her controlling the range of contexts for which the child uses the language; nor is it possible to put the contexts or the purposes in any graduated order.

The article is also naive on the question of oral testing. It is true that there is considerable experience of oral testing for the CSE examination but that testing, while valuable, has been based upon subjective and ill-defined criteria. At its best, there has been effective communication but too often it has consisted of spoken-written-English.

More to the point has been the research and oral testing undertaken

by the APU. This is far-sighted in that it asks pupils to make meanings for different purposes and in a variety of circumstances. However, the APU work has demonstrated that oral expression is far too complex to permit graded testing.

Finally, it is unfortunate that Mary Warnock's article does not address itself to the model of English which for her forms the philosophical basis of English teaching; nor does it suggest the criteria she would use to define grade boundaries in the subject.

The National Association of English Advisers accepts the philosophical view expounded in the *Bullock Report*, *Aspects of Secondary Education* and *Bullock Revisited*. These documents see English as concerned with something more fundamental than communication. English is the means by which children use language - listening, talking, writing and reading - to grapple with experience and to place it within their own "maps of reality", thus enabling them to discover what elements are peculiar to the individual and what are in common with others, to match their experience with their own and other people's expectations and evaluations, and to find meanings in it. To apply graded tests to this is to apply graded tests to living.

Thus, we remain sceptical and it appears that the Department of Education and Science document on graded assessment published in November 1983 agrees with us.

DENNIS BROOK
APU language panel representative
National Association of Advisers in English
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Safe exercise

Sir - I would like to thank Myra Barrs for her article on the usefulness of traditional English exercises "Blanks in teaching" (TES, March 9) and would add my voice to hers.

Primary Education, published by HMSO in 1959 says: "English exercises should always remain subordinate to children's writing and be used with great caution... In general, too much time is spent by older and younger juniors on exercises of this type and on comprehension exercises which bear little relation to their other work."

Most primary teachers have used - and still use - English comprehension and grammar exercises because it is safe to do so. This is the way in which we as teachers and parents were taught - and we didn't do too badly on it, did we? On open evenings parents can glance through the reams of sentences filling book after book. No question of

whether or not their children are working - they must be - look, see all that they have done!

Never mind that all the child has done in a comprehension exercise is find a key word and copy out the sentence which surrounds it; never mind that in all the many pages of grammar exercise the child has not thought of a single word for him/herself; never mind that (as Einstein wrote), "Imagination is more important than knowledge"; no, never mind all that. The parents will like it, it can be marked while watching television - there's no thought involved, and best of all - this feels as though I'm really teaching. All very sad, but true.

I believe that excessive English exercises are a sure sign of a teacher who is lacking in confidence, unimaginative or simply lazy.

R CLIVE WHITTINGTON
Cambridge Road County Primary School
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

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Budding taste

Sir - In an article by Hilary Wilce (TES, March 30, page 17), an ambiguity in the last two paragraphs may have given readers the impression that girls are willing to give subjects such as electronics a try only for a couple of months and then give them up in favour of more traditional subject areas.

All an Act

Sir - Margaret Peter's article, "A hard Act to follow" (TES, March 30) emphasized that the implementation of the 1981 Act has submerged many authorities in paperwork connected with children with special needs. Doubtless she is stating what is probably a well-founded general view, but the aspect of administration is only part of the story.

The networks of people with responsibility for children with special needs as a result of the 1981 Act may yet be small; understandings of adaptations and modifications to curricula may yet be limited. Nevertheless, they certainly exist.

Rather than being "lost in the wastelands of low achievements" as Margaret Peter stated, it is surely crucially important to note that these are the responses to the spirit of the Act which are not always best worked out with bits of paper in education offices.

Support systems for children and their parents, for teachers and head-teachers depend upon relationships, upon time, and utmost care in discussion and liaison. Changes in curriculum may require long-term collaboration, monitoring and evaluation. What seems to be needed is an acknowledgement of the greater amount of time that the careful making of support systems and the like requires.

Enthusiasm in special needs is alive and growing, and it has as much to do with the effectiveness of individuals as it has to do with piles of paper. May Margaret Peter just has not encountered it much in her talk with those whose brief is much to do with the bureaucratic response to the 1981 Act.

JEAN NOWELL
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Science skills

Sir - I note with interest the letter from Colin Smith (TES, April 6). Thameside Primary Schools Support Service might also like to know of another organization promoting good primary science.

The School Natural Science Society has existed for more than 60 years, and in its last journal has published a list of science skills including scientific attitudes that can be fostered in primary schools with pupils aged from 7 to 11 years. This document has been revised and issued under separate cover with money granted to the society from the Department of Industry. Several thousand have been sent out to local education authorities and it is hoped that many primary schools will receive their copy shortly.

J WILLIAMS
Hon Gen Secretary
SNS
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No conflict

Sir - Perhaps I was wrong, when reading Nick Wood's report (TES, March 30) on the contributions of Professor Widdowson and Mr Ewen Bird to the Joint Council of Language Associations conference, in sensing that he believes that there is some conflict between "the communicative approach" and deliberate learning under a teacher's direction. I do not imagine that either speaker made this mistake. The report certainly led me to some reflection, and to the setting down of the following five propositions, based on a lifetime of teaching and inspecting modern languages in the classroom.

1 Language is concerned with communication. All activities in the classroom must be judged by the extent to which they enable learners to communicate.

2 Oral language naturally precedes its graphic representation; and the development of oral skills should similarly precede that of reading and



Foreign parts

Sir - I disagree most emphatically with Mr B Page, member of the British Association for Language Teaching, when he says that "the second foreign language is not dying because of some natural law". (TES, March 30). The natural law which governs the development of language learning is better known as the law of supply and demand.

The customers, our pupils, do not wish to learn first foreign language, let alone a second one. They leave in droves at the first mention of the magic word options, no matter how keen they might have been at the start of their first year.

In vain do we approach the subject from every conceivable angle, change gimmicks every five years, design text books that more closely resemble their beloved comics and boost sales for Orange! We tell them that language learning is fun, but they know that it is staying in the class in the fourth year learn this to their cost.

It is no accident that standards have not changed since 1965 in spite of all the extra effort and expenditure. The pupils are fully aware of the negative value of the Graded Test Certificate; know that there is little value in the business world for their CSE, while most of those who manage to obtain a

percentage expressing a wish to be the subject in the future.

Our experience so far indicates if girls are encouraged to "read" it but that the main difficulty is overcoming their initial unease.

P SIMPSON
Director of Electronics
Ysgol Emrys Ap Iwan
Abergele
Clwyd

writing skills. But both are needed effective communication in the sophisticated environment of today.

3 The acquisition of language is a task by trial and error, as occurs in first language acquisition, is not possible in the conditions of second language learning in the classroom. Control of the grammar is needed effective communication beyond very elementary stages.

4 Learners are all different. To have on structural practice. One ask for grammatical analysis. To should be given what they need. To are to have confidence in communication.

5 The major obstacles to good first language learning in this country are the nature of our examinations, lack of motivation among speakers of world language. The former is or easily soluble than the latter.

JOE WILLIS
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West
Leeds

There is an interesting parallel between last month's report of the committee of inquiry headed by Dr David Hargreaves, which looked into underachievement in inner London comprehensives, and an East Midlands engineering firm that has recently been obliged to come to terms with its underachievement in the market place. The firm met its problems head-on with significant changes in the production process requiring the breakdown of old attitudes and demarcations and the creation of a new multi-skilled work teams. It is significant that the project engineer responsible for the new design has been appointed project manager, just as Dr David Hargreaves has been appointed chief inspector in the Inner London Education Authority since his committee was set up.

Such an appointment, with the planner becoming the person responsible for executing his own plan, is probably unique in education. It is made even more interesting by David Hargreaves' considerable impact on the educational scene, prior to the setting up of his committee, as a result of his book, *The Challenge for the Comprehensive School* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982).

It would be foolish to place report and book side by side simply to wrinkle out evidence of a change of heart or direction. The report is very much a committee report, the result of widespread consultation with pupils, parents and teachers. The book is much more a personal statement with a polemical thrust rooted in the earlier writings of Durkheim, Dewey and Raymond Williams and makes no claim to be a blue print for action.

Both however are aimed at practising teachers and state firmly that the challenge to schools - to improve the process of education and thereby reduce underachievement - is the challenge for teachers themselves and is the critical test of their professionalism. Both suggest that teachers have the power to meet this challenge through the curriculum.

The report of the independent committee of inquiry, set up by the ILEA in February 1983, is certainly not polemical. It is a careful study, firmly rooted in the school, which draws strength from the fact that all concerned - parents, teachers and pupils - recognize that there is underachievement in London schools. Although no clear consensus emerges on the causes of that underachievement, the report correctly states that "the admission of a problem is the first and most important step towards a solution".

'A far too narrowly defined basis for assessment has been in use'

How true and how refreshing to hear. Defensive attitudes are so often immovable barriers to change; the sense of relief enjoyed by sharing difficulties with others is so often the trigger for a release of new energy to tackle the difficulty.

An early and crucial element of the report declares that pupil underachievement is directly related to our present view of what achievement actually means. The report asserts that we have relied too much upon the measurement of narrow cognitive, intellectual skills to assess achievement; the skills of memory and written expression which are largely what the 16-plus assesses and which the Hargreaves report calls *achievement aspect one*. If we believe the ability to apply knowledge (*aspect two*), the personal and face-to-face skills (*aspect three*) and motivation and self-confidence (*aspect four*) are also desirable and attainable by our pupils, then we have failed them comprehensively; first, by not working at a wider acceptance of the definition of achievement and second by not developing effective means of assessment for factors such as motivation and commitment.

Clear links are made in the report between this failure to come to terms more positively with the assessment of achievement and behavioural problems in schools. "When the school believes it is not within its power to influence this aspect (four) teachers begin to explain the lack of achievement in terms of the pupils' background... (and) lower teacher expectations become self-fulfilling."

The committee's attempts to redefine achievement are brave, honest and deserve national attention - and not just in schools. Alarm bells should be ringing up and down the country for here, one suspects, lies the nub of the issue of underachievement. A far too narrowly defined basis for assessment has been in use which, because of its close relationship with the present examinations structure at 16, has rarely been questioned. We must stop preparing vast numbers of our pupils for built-in failure and enable them instead to reach attainable goals.

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A capital report...

with important implications for the whole country,
Frank Stoner says of the Hargreaves report



more effectively than those with wider options and the need to think 14 to 18 rather than 14 to 16 is effectively argued.

The proposed fourth and fifth form curriculum for London schools (60 to 70 per cent core with some constrained and some open options) contains six elements: English language and literature; mathematics; science; personal and social education with religious education; at least one aesthetic subject; at least one technical subject.

Much more exciting is the call to "restructure the two-year courses... into half term units... each meaningful in itself and adapted to the time perspective of 14 year olds". This would avoid a vague two-year educational journey towards nebulous and distant goals. Such reshaping should enable a more personal negotiation of goals to take place between teacher and pupil, more active learning for pupils to happen and perhaps allow greater flexibility across unit and even year groups. The Unit 'credits' awarded would make explicit reference to the assessment of relevant practical or applied knowledge and skills.

This proposal presents a challenge to all teachers and an enhanced opportunity for students. It is an idea which could and should be investigated far more widely than London and one that is in tune with recent initiatives such as profiling.

It is hard to be quite so positive about the curriculum model, however, and certain questions do need to be asked. Why is it necessary for Mathematics and English to receive a greater allocation than other disciplines? What does this say to the pupil about school attitudes to the curriculum? Have opportunities been missed for a more substantial whole-curriculum approach to mathematics and English? Might the enhancement of personal and social skills (highly laudable) to formal, bureaucratic status work against coherence and the development of these skills across all subjects? If a major thrust for raising levels of achievement is to be a re-focusing of the importance of examinations why consider examining personal and social skills?

The report does not duck the thorny issue of teacher morale. It attempts to build upon the partnership of interests established during the committee's investigation and the adventurous proposals for job exchanges within and between schools are welcome. The identification of inconsistencies from school to school in the handling of probationary teachers will prompt a sense of

'It is in the classroom that the real curriculum battles are going to be fought'

considerable unease nationally and reminds us all that a paper system is simply not enough.

The committee is correct to identify efficiency in the role of heads of departments and faculties as crucial for the well being of the school. While one accepts the conclusion that the success of schools is closely related to the quality of leadership of the head, it is on the middle management ground and subsequently in the classroom that the real battles of curriculum and teacher shift are going to be fought and won.

The committee's report undoubtedly reflects its own curriculum aims; it is coherent, balanced and certainly broad. The framework of the report, including the list of 104 recommendations and a plan for implementation, is flexible enough to respond to criticisms.

We should guard against being misled by the feeling that much of what the report has to say sounds familiar. The encapsulation of ideas and strategies, although deceptively simple in style, is mastery and the shaping of a plan for implementation without the injection of massive new resources thoroughly realistic.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said "a radical is a man with both feet firmly planted in the air". Here is a radical report which is firmly rooted in the ground. It is a capital report of national significance and demands close scrutiny by the teaching profession at large, for in seeking the causes of underachievement for a city's pupils it has settled on a checklist for action to improve the quality of education for all.

Can the new chief inspector for the ILEA deliver the goods? Let him take heart from the earlier industrial example for in that Midlands engineering company the new plant is very successful, morale is high and the firm has been saved from extinction. May the similarities be sustained.

Frank Stoner is director of the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools (CSCS) based at the University of York.

When the school holidays come round and teachers limp away from the firing line, shell-shocked and a little ragged around the edges, they will loudly assert from behind deeply-ringed eyes that they are about to take a well-deserved rest.

A persistent classroom drubbing has taken its toll again. Teacher is about to put his toes up and snatch a break. But that, of course, is never what happens. Coping with swivelling young Parker is about to be replaced by wallpapering the living room, visiting the in-laws digging the garden and taking the kids to the seaside.

Denise, a mischievous PE teacher out on licence from a large South Wales comprehensive, was living, wheezing, cheerful proof that it need not be like that.

She picked at a raw vegetable salad in a well-appointed dining room overlooking green fields, and beamed. It was the Friday of half-term and she ought to have looked as ruinous as when it began. Instead, she wore the air of a newly restored ancient monument, with the brickwork cleaned up, new pointing and a fresh coat of paint.

"Teaching's so stressful. Yes, I did feel a little under par on Monday. But now," she said, sharpening her appetite on a raw mushroom, "I feel a new person. I'm actually looking forward to going back to school next week."

It was enough to make the entire head teachers association look over their glasses in shock. What had wrought this transformation? For the previous four days, Denise had been relentlessly plunged into hot and cold water, beaten by men in white coats, strapped into electrical devices, steamed, and starved.

She had jogged round fields in the drizzle, been swimming three times a day, jumped up and down in time to music. And she had scarcely touched a drop of alcohol. What punishment was this? Denise was at a health farm.

So were her staffroom colleagues, Joanna, Gillian and Brenda, all of whom glowed like newly refurbished works of art. So, in fact, were 17 other assorted teachers. Health farm staff knew it was half-term because that week more than half the clientele were on leave from the classroom.

The health hydro's director, Jo Wilson, had counted 21 nervous, exhausted and battle-scarred teachers in on Tuesday and reckoned that by Friday she would count 21 refreshed, reinvigorated and able professionals out again, lighter by about £170.

"Teachers have such a hard time. I notice that when they arrive, they're more tense than most. Their blood pressure is high and their shoulders are stiff," she said "But after about two days..."

Two days at a health farm is a long time by anybody else's clock. And any resemblance to being trapped in the fifth form changing rooms after a sweaty game of lacrosse is entirely superficial. A health farm is supposed to do you good.

From the moment the teachers arrived they knew they were in for something different. The building, an ancient and rustic stately home near the Quantocks, might have been a discreet SAS training centre. Their bodies were about to receive a short, sharp schooling in disciplined self-indulgence. From deep inside came the sound of splashing and muted thumping.

The agony began almost immediately. The first thing they noticed was that while the health farm seemed to boast every other comfort known to oppressed and weary humankind, there was no bar.

Shortly afterwards, following brisk interviews with the director, 21 flabby, creaking, sorely alive members of the teaching profession began a



REFRESHER COURSE

Mike Durham undergoes the treatment designed to pummel, bake, steam and starve away the stresses of the classroom



'You lie in the dark all wired up... ideal for remedial science pupils'



'The steam cabinet makes an interview with HMI cool by comparison'

new lease of life. Bodies more used to concrete pudding and i.e.a. custard learned to cope with muesli, wholesome bread and salads.

For the real remedial cases there was nothing but lemon and hot water for 48 hours. "But no carrot juice," Jo Wilson said firmly. "That's a myth." And then there were the treatments.

In the gleamingly sterile treatment area a torso of almost epic proportions appeared from behind a curtain, wearing the glazed smile of a local authority representative fresh from the Burnham pay talks. "God," she said weakly, "that was exhilarating."

Therapist Tracey was waiting. She ordered me to strip to my trunks and lie on a table. "Now just relax," she purred, approaching with a device that looked like a cross between a pneumatic drill and a giant vibrator. She added without much reassurance, "You're only the second man I've ever done."

"Have you ever had a G5 before?" she inquired. And I had to admit that, rich and varied as life had been, no, a G5 was something I had never experienced.

"Teachers?" she asked, as she ran this throbbing device up and down my legs. It was a difficult interview. "Oh, we've had a few of those. They're a great laugh. They just come for a giggle. I saw what she meant as she attacked the soles of my feet."

Teachers, said Tracy between shoulder blades, were a right shower. "They come to get away from the kids and have a good time. Better than this? "Oh, you'll feel so much better afterwards."

She cited examples of teachers out of school. There was one, for example, who was not above a quick smoke in the sauna. She had also distinguished herself by drinking the water intended for throwing on the coals. "Oh yes," said Tracey, "a right lot". I made my excuses and left, slightly weak at the knees.

In the massage room another victim was dangling upside down by the ankles from a contraption worthy of the Chamber of Horrors. "It's good for your back," she said. From behind a drape came the awful sound of someone being slapped very hard.

Within seconds a young masseuse had me powerless on a trestle. "Just relax," she said, which was obviously a coded message that something deeply personal was about to happen.

"You can tell the teachers, they're all tense," said Lis, as she rubbed me with vegetable oil. "They're usually nervous at first." I imagined the loss of credibility suffered by the head of maths if his O level candidates could see him like this.

"Of course, they get over their shyness in a couple of days," she added, attacking in a place movement up both thighs.

In the circumstances, she must get to know a lot about her clients. "Oh yes, it's surprising what you can find out about someone in half an hour," said Lis gaily, kneading an obstinate neck muscle. "People often spill out their hearts. If they've got problems, they're glad to talk to a stranger."

But teachers are apparently not great conversationalists on the therapy couch. "Actually, teachers don't talk very much about their private lives, or even about school. I think they're glad to get away from it."

Just to pile on the agony, I was sent through for a Slendertone. This will be familiar to biology teachers. It is like the experiment concerning disembodied frogs' legs and an electric current. You lie in the dark for half an hour wired up to electrodes with your muscles twitching in all directions.

It would make an ideal discipline, I reflected, for thousands of remedial science pupils. Homework: lie there and twitch for an hour.

There were many other delights. There was the

steam cabinet - the little box out of which your head comically protrudes - which must make an interview with an HMI cool by comparison; a peat bath is like the showers after rugby on a muddy day. There was the sauna, the mud pack, the osteopath and the acupuncturist for those so inclined.

In the gym, a body control class was in progress. Thirty bodies lacking any sort of coordination flopped about the floor like a school of beached walrus.

I was refused a facial on the grounds that the skin cream would get into my beard. Lady teachers, apparently, go for it in a big way. Some go in for a complete refit involving leg waxing, manicure, pedicure, eyelash restoring and a hair-do.

Teachers tend to arrive dowdy and leave looking glamorous," confided beautician Tracey Bailey. "Although, of course, there are those who don't bother. They've done without it all these years, so why should they start now?"

But having gone through it all in the past four days, teacher Denise was a convert. "It's marvellous. Everything's so leisurely. I've been really pampered," she bubbled. Perhaps, then, it was the jacuzzi that had really toned her up for a fresh onslaught on the school playing fields.

I found myself sharing the jacuzzi with three strapping ladies from the Women's League for Health and Beauty. "Sorry," they sang out, "We're not teachers". It was hard to reply because the bubbles were up my trunks.

But teachers are not the only ones who get away from the classroom at half-term. A young girl named Emma clambered in and announced that she was a pupil at a local school and she was trying to get away from the teachers. If so, she had come to the wrong place.

"Yes," sighed Denise, "this is a nice change. Teaching in a comprehensive school is very stressful. You certainly feel near breaking point at times."

"I feel so well," said Gillian with a faint air of surprise. "I can cope with anything now. I can take it all in my stride."

"You get tired of being a teacher," said Joanna who was glowing like a spring-cleaned Balisha beacon. "People think we have an easy life. But you need to recover from it somehow."

Jo Wilson, who opened Cedar Falls Health Farm, near Taunton, two years ago, sees so many teachers every half-term that she is considering giving them a discount. "They seem to suffer a different sort of stress from other clients - the frustrations, the kids. But we soon knock that out of them."

Almost all the teachers are women. "Men tend to frown on it a bit," Ms Wilson said. "Maybe they think it's all about losing weight and beauty treatments. But once they're here, they enjoy themselves."

Meanwhile, newly polished-up and raring to go, teacher Gillian was roughly lighting up a cigarette in preparation for the rigours that were soon to confront her. "I'm actually looking forward to starting back again on Monday," she said.

Would they keep up the good work - apple and a crispbread for lunch, jogging after school and a workout in the gym twice a week? "We'll try," they said cheerfully. "And we'll be back next year. We're saving up already."

If jacuzzis and sauna baths are as good for our children's education as all that, perhaps Sir Keith Joseph would consider putting them on the rates? Teachers seem to thrive on it. But then they always were gluttons for punishment.

Cedar Falls Health farm is at Bishops Lydeard, Nr Taunton, Somerset.



'Bodies more used to concrete pudding and i.e.a. custard learned to cope with muesli and salad'



A chance to perform

The broadcaster, Marjorie Lofthouse, tells Susan Thomas how rising pressures and falling standards drove her from the classroom

Marjorie Lofthouse laughs a lot. That is probably the second thing you notice about her. The first is her voice. Warm, mellow and so full of harmonic variations that it might have been synthesized, it is the ideal medium for a radio presenter and no disaster on television. Does she have to work on it, I ask?

She laughs, a melodic falling scale, encompassing half an octave at the very least. No, she assures me, hugging a slender knee. "It's absolutely natural, though friends do sometimes accuse me of putting on my *Woman's Hour* voice."

Sitting in the potted palm plush of Pebble Mill, it is almost impossible to imagine the elegant Mrs Lofthouse in her previous existence as senior teacher at a tough Tyneside comprehensive.

Perhaps, though, in spite of all the excitement and razzamatazz of the new life, she misses the nitty gritty challenge of girls' pastoral care, careers, and students on teaching practice. Just sometimes.

When I suggested it she fell about. "Never", she confessed gaily. "I just can't believe this is work. I feel I am on permanent holiday - it must be the same for you." And then instantly contrite - aware of her almost too good fortune: "Oh dear, does that sound dreadful? Tell me I'm not the only person you've talked to who feels like this."

She is acutely perceptive - the shade of an idea moves in your mind and she's on to it, like a kitten with a butterfly. "I watch people's faces, especially their eyes. You can tell such a lot from eyes," she says and fixes me with a dark and steady gaze. It is a look which would have held 42 transfixed at 50 paces, and she perfected it in that no-man's land at the front of the class.

She taught for 11 years. Mostly geography, though she trained to teach French. Later, as senior teacher at Kenton Comprehensive in Newcastle, she hardly ever took a lesson. "I spent most of my time talking to people, well more listening really. Trying to reconcile the mutually exclusive views of pupils, teachers and parents."

"It was incredibly exhausting. Required an amazing amount of tact. Every day it seemed my door would burst open and a furious, red-faced member of staff would thrust some quivering, sobbing adolescent into my room shouting 'I absolutely will not have this'... in my class again."

Teenage girls are probably the most difficult group to teach there is. And inexperienced teachers are totally vulnerable. If they fail with a child they become aggressive and the fault becomes the pupil's, though this is not necessarily the case. Then you have to be very objective, talk to everyone involved, probably make home visits because parents don't want to come to school, be prepared to counter aggression from every side - pupil, parents and teacher. It's very demanding, and in the end you can't face it any more.

Once a teacher...

pressures and falling standards drove her from the classroom

"But perhaps the most dispiriting thing - and remember this is the mid-seventies I'm talking about. I understand it's very much better now - was the standard of students on teaching practice. People who couldn't spell, did atrocious writing on the board, wore jeans, put their feet on the table and tried to be friends with the children. Perhaps I'm old fashioned," she said, watching my eyes with hawklike intensity, "but I feel that teachers are there to set standards."

There were rewards. "Parents came back sometimes to say 'I don't know what you did but it made all the difference' and there were those impossible girls who, against all the odds, took your advice, got a job and settled down."

But all that was six years ago. "I left because the pressures had become intolerable, standards were falling and the outlook was so dismal. It was the right time to go - I had given education all I had to offer and I was no longer getting any enjoyment out of my work."

Perhaps I'm old fashioned but I feel teachers are there to set standards

Friends were aghast. "What about superannuation, holidays, security?", they said. But in the event it was not such a big step. "I'm an actress *manqué* - saw every class I taught as a chance to perform, and assembly as an even bigger chance." Already she was a regular weekend broadcaster with Newcastle's Metro Radio, and it was not too difficult to land a job as continuity announcer with Radio Leeds.

She planned the new career meticulously, learning the basic skills with a small station before moving on to national and network programmes. "Things like timing, plugging back in to the main programme, simply getting used to the cameras, and writing my own script."

From Leeds she went to HTV Bristol as continuity announcer and presenting a *Six O'Clock* programme. Then, three years ago, she came to Pebble Mill. "Now I do a mixture of presenting and producing. I love it. For the time being I want to keep that balance. It means that if I find some fascinating story I can go ahead and follow it up."

Her first task at the Mill was to present a series of programmes on self-defence for women: "I have developed a very good instinctive reaction to attack now. My husband's extremely wary if he comes on me unexpectedly."

Since then she has done *Woman's Hour*, *Twopence to Cross the Mersey*, *The Greying of America* - a rather sober documentary about the problems of an aging American population - and the *Enterprise* series on successful small firms.

This year it's stately homes, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the continuing Radio 2 light music series *Romantic Strip* and the chance to produce poetry. "I did a personal anthology, *Sounds Like Winter* quite recently. That was lovely, took me ages to research but it was worth every minute."

She is still learning. "I had to discipline myself in quite a new way from teaching. To be absolutely punctual for appointments, to learn an economy of words in script-writing, to plan and conduct an interview to the second and to steer it so that the points I want to make emerge naturally. I love presenting but I'm enjoying production too. It gives me more power."

How important was it to have power, I asked? "Power to explore new ideas," she said, firmly, "to choose material, give a particular emphasis to a programme. That sort of power. But I've always been pretty assertive - you have to be, to be a teacher, don't you? My husband still says 'Hey, you're not in the classroom now you know'. And that's after six years."

So far she feels no inclination to handle serious or controversial subjects. She is still on holiday. "I enjoy being myself. I don't want to be solemn and I don't think I could be nasty enough to argue with people."

Nor has she ventured into schools broadcasting. "I've tried to keep away from education in fact." This, in spite of finding careers broadcasts depressingly bad in the old days and having some very decided opinions on the subject. "The situations were amazingly coy and unrealistic, the scripts cliché ridden. The language was never what the children would have used and, come to think of it," she said, raising hands and eyebrows in mock horror, "the acting was bad as well. They'd have done much better to have gone out and made a series of interviews on the job."

Looking back, I said, what did she see as the strengths of the education system, the things she would hate to change. "Now I'm going to sound terribly old fashioned I suppose," she said, resignedly. "School uniform because it acts as a great leveller. Examinations because they give all children, even the CSE Mode 3's, something to work for. And all the wonderful opportunities and facilities that have appeared since my own schooldays - school visits, skiing, holidays, music lessons - you can't put a price on those things."

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The Education Policy Information Centre is the focal point within England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the EURYPICE information network on education policy, operating in all the European Community member states. As part of the reorganisation of this service, the successful candidate will be responsible for coordinating and preparing answers to policy questions received through the European network and helping United Kingdom authorities to make effective use of the service. Broad knowledge of the United Kingdom education field is essential. Experience of information work and knowledge of at least one European language would be advantageous.

Information Development Officer, EMIE

The Education Management Information Exchange is a research project, providing a range of information services primarily for education officers and advisers in Local Education Authorities in England and Wales. The person appointed will help maintain and develop the EMIE information services, key tasks being to seek new information, answer policy questions from LEAs, and update the computer database. Secondly the Officer will support the setting up of the new Department, which aims to promote information research and development projects in the education field. Knowledge of education policy and administration at LEA level would be an asset. Skill in report writing and in analysing and organising information is essential.

Salary Scales: Research Officer/Senior Research Officer: £8,080 to £14,125
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For application forms and further particulars, please apply to the Personnel Officer, National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, The More, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ. Tel: Slough 74123.

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